Perception of the Environment and the Traces of Today's Nature Devastation in Amerigo Vespucci's Letters

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AGİŞ

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Wishing for the protection of the world's natural heritage...

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1. INTRODUCTION

The subject of this study is to examine the traces of the desire to exploit the environment for commercial reasons and the destruction of the environment, which were common in Europe at the time of Amerigo Vespucci's letters (late 15th and early 16th centuries), as well as the perspective on the lifestyles of the people of the countries of the European continent and the natives of the American continent, which were affected by a cultural exchange arising from the different ethnic and commercial structures of the natives of those lands due to the aim and realization of commercial exploration of different lands, in terms of the approach of environmental criticism.[1] The land which Amerigo Vespucci traveled to consists of untouched soil, but over the course of about 500 years, some species that inhabit these lands have become extinct or are on the verge of extinction. The American continent is full of many natural riches; but the accuracy of the information given by Amerigo Vespucci is now in doubt, for without DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) testing, one cannot be sure whether the natives were cannibals or not, and that trade routes could only be found by tracing the positions of the stars. It is necessary to collect valid data by living among the natives and using the participant observation technique to learn the cultural structure and values of different human communities. Cultural anthropologists try to understand the languages of the communities they encounter and to explain their traditions. Amerigo Vespucci does not try to understand the languages and cultures of the communities he encounters; only as a merchant seafarer, when he arrives in the Americas, he admires the diversity of its

[1]Vespucci, Amerigo. 2013. *Cronache Epistolari: Lettere 1476-1508.* Compiler: Perini, Leandro. Firenze [Florence]: Firenze University Press. (The letters of Amerigo Vespucci, which constitute the data of the study, are in this book).

natural beauty and leads to the formation of a trade route for the natural products to reach Europe. Even though the fertility of the soils of the American continent continues today, certain animal and plant species are no longer found today. Indigenous folks are protected by some programs.

In this study, Amerigo Vespucci's traditional perception of nature and his admiration for nature are compared with those of St. Tomaso and St. Francesco within the scope of environmentalism. In addition, Amerigo Vespucci's view of the environment as a source of profit as a merchant prepares the destruction of nature today. For example, the value he attaches to gold and its search for a trade route are linked to many environmental problems in the region today. Thus, as an example of the commercial conceptions that prepared the destruction of nature today, which is planned to be examined in this study, Amerigo Vespucci, who is wrote the following in his letter to Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco dei Medici, known as '*Mundus Novus' ['New World']* (Lisbon, 1502-1503), where it is understood that his main intention was to trade gold, although he made praise-filled statements about nature:

> *"These lands are very fertile; they have not only diverse hills, mountains, valleys, but also wide rivers in abundance; It is also watered by healthy springs. It is covered with vast and densely wooded forests that are almost impenetrable and filled with all kinds of wild animals. Large trees grow there without pruning; these trees give fruits that are pleasant to the palate and nourish the human body; none of them are harmful. They are never like those in our country; there is also an unlimited variety of fruits and herbs from*

> *which the locals make bread and amazing dishes. There are also many seeds that do not resemble ours [...]. The natives informed us that there was an abundance of gold under the ground, but they did not value gold at all, nor did they see it as a valuable object. There are plenty of pearls here as I told you about earlier"* (Vespucci, 2013: 133).

This study tries to uncover and explain the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors of that period that were based on the exploitation of the environment and towards the admiration for the environment expressed in the letters of Amerigo Vespucci.

In addition, this study reveals Amerigo Vespucci's admiration for nature within the framework of his environmentalist approach in his descriptions of the places he encountered or visited around South and Central America (for example, the countries now known as Brazil and Venezuela, the Canary Islands, Curaçao, and the Cape Verde) and his thoughts that prepared the destruction of nature today. At that time, the Portuguese and Spanish economies were based on foreign trade. For example, the famous historian Fernand Braudel (1995)[2], who depicts trade routes in the Mediterranean in the 15th and 16th centuries, also mentions the gold and silver trade of Portugal and Spain. Thus, this study reflects how invasive Amerigo Vespucci is in the light of his approach to environmental criticism[3] and tries to answer the question of how much he can be considered a traveler.

[2] Braudel, Fernand. 1995. *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean world in the age of Philip II.* Berkeley, California: University of California Press.

[3] Living species can *'invade'* the region where a living being different from itself lives, and by starting to live there, it can cause those species to disappear in that region (Ritvo, Harriet. May 2017. Invasion/Invasive: *Living Lexicon for the Environmental Humanities. Environmental Humanities* 9 (1): 171-174).

1. 1. Aim of the Dissertation

This study aims to reveal the conflict between Amerigo Vespucci's admiration for wild nature in the letters of the late 15th and early 16th centuries and the traces that prepare today's destruction of nature. It also aims to show that in the thought of Amerigo Vespucci, before Bacon and Descartes, the exploitation of nature for commercial purposes was legitimized. [4]

From a literary point of view, this study is important for its analysis of trade and society in Europe in the late 15th and early 16th centuries, and for understanding the traces of present-day destruction of nature as well as the desire to take advantage of trade-based nature, which is at odds with the admiration for the nature of newly discovered wilderness at the time. Amerigo Vespucci's letters have not been translated into Turkish just as a note.

In this first introductory section, after mentioning the purpose of the study, research questions are posed and past similar works, in the form of a literature review, and the life of Amerigo Vespucci are described. In the second part, *the 'environmental criticism'* approach is mentioned. In addition, based on the letters of Amerigo Vespucci, his admiration for the wild nature of the places he discovered and his thoughts preparing the destruction of today's nature are explained. The results are in the third part.

[4]The works of Francis Bacon and René Descartes are included in this book: Cantor, Norman F.; Peter L. Klein (ed.); Francis Bacon and René Descartes (authors; works in the book). 1969. *Seventeenth-century rationalism: Bacon & Descartes*. Waltham, Massachusetts: Blaisdell Publishing Company.

1. 2. Research Questions

In this work, in all the letters written by Amerigo Vespucci,[5] the commercial anthropocentric views that prepare today's destruction of nature and his admiration for nature that contradict these views are investigated in terms of the environmentalist criticism approach, seeking answers to the following questions:

1. Where does Amerigo Vespucci discover and how does he make use of nature to make these discoveries?

2. Starting from Amerigo Vespucci's admiration for nature and the idea that the natives are wild, how are the traces of today's destruction of nature depicted in his letters?

3. What are the reasons for Amerigo Vespucci's admiration for and praise of wild nature (animals and plants)?

4. Starting from the savagery of the natives, depending on the desire to receive help from nature, how are the traces that prepare the destruction of nature today depicted in Amerigo Vespucci's letters?

5. Why and how are the natural resources of the Americas important in trade, based on the culture Amerigo Vespucci received, according to his letters?

[5] Summaries of these letters are in Appendix 1.

6. What kind of understanding of nature does the Bible lead Amerigo Vespucci to form?

7. What kind of understanding of nature does Christian saints lead to in Amerigo Vespucci?

8. Are there any extinct or endangered animal and plant species in the places in South and Central America that Amerigo Vespucci discovered today?

9. How wandering and how invasive can Amerigo Vespucci be considered? (The entire study seeks an answer to this question).

1. 3. Literature Review

Literary research on the approach to environmental criticism is just beginning to sprout in Europe. For this reason, there is no study that can be considered within the scope of the environmental criticism approach written on the letters of Amerigo Vespucci. Battles (1996)[6] examines the social status of indigenous women depicted by Amerigo Vespucci in his letters.

Research on Amerigo Vespucci is generally within the scope of historical scholarship. The books by Fitzpatrick-Alper (1991)[7] and Fernández-Armesto (2007)[8] involve the biography of Amerigo Vespucci.

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[6] Battles, Angela. 1996. *A vision of women: Literary representations of women in the New World in 'The Soderini Letter' or 'The Four Voyages of Amerigo Vespucci.'* Master's thesis, State University of West Georgia, United States.
[7] Fitzpatrick-Alper, Ann. 1991. *Forgotten voyager: The story of Amerigo Vespucci*. Minneapolis: Carolrhoda Books.
[8] Fernández-Armesto, Felipe. 2007. *Amerigo: The man who gave his name to America*. New York: Random House.

Regarding infectious diseases, in the context of the history of medicine, Muñoz-Sanz (2006)[9] writes that before Amerigo Vespucci, Christopher Columbus and his friends, who went to the American continent for the second time in 1493 with pigs, roosters and horses they had collected from the Canary Islands, caught the flu due to viruses in pigs, and that by taking these three animal species, which are not found in the American continent and which are likely to carry viruses, there was a possibility that they would cause the death of 90% of the Native Americans due to an infectious disease, that is, the flu epidemic. Muñoz-Sanz (2006) condemns this behavior of Columbus and his friends because animals removed from their habitat in nature are destructive of the natives who used to live a peaceful life in nature.

Additionally, in his academic blog post on the history of medicine Winchcombe (2016)[10] recounts how Amerigo Vespucci, a 15th-century traveler, noted that the natives lived exceptionally long and rarely got sick. Therefore, he argues that Europeans are looking for natural remedies in exotic places on the American continent. For instance, for Winchcombe (2016), in that period, Europeans thought that even the tobacco grown in the American continent was good for headaches, toothaches, and swellings, there was a water source in the American continent whose water prevented people from aging, and that there was a '*tree of life'* in Canada whose leaves healed some diseases .

[9] Muñoz-Sanz, Agustin. 2006. La gripe de Cristóbal Colón. Hipótesis sobre una catástrofe ecológica [Christopher Columbus flu. A hypothesis for an ecological catastrophe]. *Enfermedades Infecciosas y Microbiologia Clinica* 24 (5): 326-334.
[10] Winchcombe, Rachel. 18/05/2016. Creating Cures in Early America. *Early Modern Medicine*. Web: https://earlymodernmedicine.com/creating-cures-in-early-america/ (accessed: 01/12/2017).

Abulafia (2008)[11], who devotes a chapter of his book to Amerigo Vespucci's impressions of the natives he encountered, suggests that editorials may have been added to Amerigo Vespucci's letters, or that Amerigo Vespucci may have made exaggerated additions to what he saw to attract public attention like a journalist. In 1516, Thomas More's *Utopia* was published (Abulafia, 2008: 242). Abulafia (2008: 242) describes how Thomas More created a character named Raphael Hythloday, who accompanied Amerigo Vespucci during his last three travels in his work; by this example he implies that Vespucci may also depict imaginary persons. He (2008: 243) also argues that the term '*New World'* was used by others before Vespucci. Besides, Abulafia (2008: 242) argues that Vespucci's depictions of nature are exaggerated in his pursuit of fame. The reason for which Vespucci treats the natives well is to cunningly obtain their gold; there is no evidence for him to defend that the natives were cannibals (Abulafia, 2008: 251).

De Asúa ve French (2016: 11-12)[12] narrate that Amerigo Vespucci's letter to Pier Soderini describes the snake-like animal that the natives ate, after turning it around a fire for frying; it was depicted as a giant lizard resembling a dragon in Théodore de Bry's anthology titled *America*. In addition, Amerigo Vespucci's depictions of various animals and the paradise in the Americas are like those of Columbus (De Asúa ve French, 2016: 11).

Given these earlier studies, it would be beneficial for the humanities to look at Amerigo Vespucci's travels and their causes from the point of view of

[11] Abulafia, David. 2008. Vespucci's tabloid journalism, 1497–1504: A Florentine publicist. *The discovery of mankind*: *Atlantic encounters in the age of Columbus*, 241–261. London: Yale University.
[12] De Asúa, Miguel; Roger French. 2016. *A new world of animals: Early modern Europeans on the creatures of Iberian America*. New York: Routledge.

environmental criticism of the commercial traces that prepare today's destruction of nature, which contradicts Vespucci's sense of admiration for nature. In the next chapter, the biography of Amerigo Vespucci will be examined, and it will be explained how his family's social relations and the education he received contributed to his becoming a merchant sailor.

1. 4. Life of Amerigo Vespucci (1451/1454-1512)

Some historians say that Amerigo Vespucci was born in Florence on March 9, 1451, whereas other historians claim that he was born in 1454 ("Amerigo Vespucci," 2017).[13]

According to Ober (1907),[14] Vespucci was born on March 9, 1451. However, Fernández-Armesto (2007: 18) explains that Florentine official documents at the time state that March 25 was recognized as the New Year's Day, and that the recognition of January 1 as the New Year's Day was based on ancient Roman traditions, suggesting that both dates were the same.[15]

[13] "Amerigo Vespucci: Explorer (c. 1451–c. 1512)." A&E Television Networks, LLC. April 27, 2017. Web: http://www.biography.com/people/amerigo-vespucci-9517978 (accessed: 04/07/2018).
[14] Ober, Frederick A. (Frederick Albion). 1907. *Amerigo Vespucci* (Kindle Locations 1-5). Kindle Edition. New York; London: Harper & Brothers.
[15] On March 25, the Prophet Mary miraculously became pregnant with Jesus; Gabriel's announcement of this to the Prophet Mary is celebrated as the '*Good News'* feast (Dünya Dinleri. 09/04/2014. Hıristiyan bayramları ve kutsal günleri, Hıristiyan inancında Beşaret bayramı (Blagoveştenie). Web: http://www.dunyadinleri.com/dunya-dinleri/hiristiyan-bayramlari-ve-kutsal-gunleri/oku_hiristiyan-inancinda-besaret-bayrami-blagovestenie (accessed: 04/04/2017)).

Figure 7. Statue of Amerigo Vespucci, Gaetano Grazzini, Uffizi Gallery[16]

Amerigo Vespucci's father, the notary Ser Nastagio, and his mother, Lisabetta Mini, are known as remarkably close friends of the Medici family, who ruled Florence, Italy between the 1400s and 1737[17]; Amerigo Vespucci's older

[16] Grazzini, Gaetano. Amerigo Vespucci Heykeli, Uffizi Galerisi. *Wikimedia Commons*: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Amerigo_Vespucci_Uffizzi_Florence.jpg (accessed: 04/07/2018).

[17]The Medici were engaged in trade in Florence, and during the reign of Cosimo dei Medici, the banks began to open branches abroad, just as the banks of Rome, Venice, Pisa and Milan were added to the bank of Florence; Cosimo dei Medici, who was engaged in this work, died on 1 August 1464, but Cosimo I, another member of the Medici family, who was proclaimed duke in 1537, helped develop new industrial areas: marble caves in Carrara and Pietrasanta, iron mines on the island of Elba, aluminum in Piombino; Cosimo I died in 1574 (Vannucci, Marcello. 1995. *Breve Storia di Firenze: Dalle origini ai nostri giorni.* Tascabili Economici Newton. Rome: Newton & Compton editor, op. cit., pp. 23 and 26-28). Following the discovery of America, different industries developed in Europe. Florence advanced financially with trade, wool, and banking; the Medici family also became financial supporters of the artists (TheMediciFamily.com. Medici family: Origins and history. Undated. Web: http://www.themedicifamily.com/ (accessed: 04/04/2017)). The family bank, the Medici Bank, was founded in Florence in 1397; in 1402, the Venetian branch of

brothers studied at the University of Pisa ("Amerigo Vespucci," 2017). Antonio became a jurist and Girolamo became a clergyman (Fernández-Armesto 2007: 19).

Figure 8. Ghirlandaio, Domenico. Circa 1472. Madonna of Mercy and Lamentation[18]

Amerigo Vespucci's education led him to become a merchant sailor of the Catholic faith, because he received his primary education from his uncle, Giorgio Antonio Vespucci, a Dominican priest ("Amerigo Vespucci," 2017). His uncle, Giorgio Antonio Vespucci, taught him poetry, rhetoric, history, philosophy, cosmography, astronomy, as well as astrology (Fernández-Armesto, 2007: 20). Amerigo Vespucci had the works of Titus Livius, Dante, and Petrarca in his library;

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the bank was opened; in 1492, this bank was seized (TheMediciFamily.com. The Medici banks. Undated. Web: http://www.themedicifamily.com/The-Medici-Bank.html (accessed: 03/03/2017)). Despite this, the Medici are recognized as an influential family that ruled Florence from 1434 to 1737 (The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica. 2009. "Cosimo de' medici: Ruler of Florence [1389-1464]." *Encyclopædia Britannica*: https://global.britannica.com/biography/Cosimo-de-Medici (accessed: 03/03/2017)).

[18] Ghirlandaio, Domenico. Around1472. *Madonna della misericordia*. *Wikimedia Commons*: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Domenico_ghirlandaio,_madonna_della_misericordia,_ognissanti,_Firenze.jpg (accessed: 04/07/2018). Family members of Amerigo Vespucci are depicted.

his friend, Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco dei Medici was educated by Amerigo Vespucci's uncle, as well; therefore, both had deep knowledge of cosmology; the Byzantine Manuel Chrysoloras introduced Ptolemy's[19] *Geography* to his students in order to spread the study of Greek (Ancient Greek) in Europe, and from 1397 cosmology began to be learned in Florence (Fernández-Armesto, 2007: 21). Strabo's cosmological ideas in geography were also spread among the participants of the church council that met in 1439 (Fernández-Armesto, 2007: 22). Paolo del Pozzo Toscanelli put forward a theory for the first time that Asia could be reached from the West; Toscanelli was a mutual acquaintance of Christopher Columbus and Amerigo Vespucci (Fernández-Armesto, 2007: 22).

Following his education, Amerigo Vespucci entered the business world. When Amerigo Vespucci was in his twenties, his uncle, Guido Antonio Vespucci, who had served as ambassador to Florence on behalf of King Louis XI of France, appointed him on a short-term diplomatic mission in Paris ("Amerigo Vespucci," 2017).

At the age of twenty-four, Amerigo Vespucci began his trading business at the urging of his father; first as a merchant in Florence, then in Seville, Spain, developing a partnership with fellow Florentine Gianetto Berardi, he began

[19]Claudius Ptolemy, by his English name Claudius Ptolemy or by his Latin name Claudius Ptolemaeus (see Ptolemy of Claudius). Jones, Alexander Raymond. 11/04/2017. "Ptolemy. " *Encyclopædia Britannica*: https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ptolemy (accessed: 25/04/2018)); is an astronomer born in Alexandria; *He* has a thirteen-volume work called the Almagest, which gives information about the positions and brightness of stars and planets; he is the one who explains that the earth is round and that the other planets revolve around the earth; In his *Geography*, according to his knowledge of mathematics and what he learned from travelers, he drew a map of the world covering the continents of Africa, Asia, and Europe, in which he separated the South and North Poles by the line now known as the Equator; Amerigo Vespucci developed the concept of longitude based on this distinction (Ray, Kurt. 2004. *Amerigo Vespucci: Italian Explorers of the Americas*. New York: Rosen Publishing Group, Inc.; pages 10-14).

banking; he is said to have worked for the Medici between 1483 and 1492 ("Amerigo Vespucci," 2017). In the 1490s, Amerigo Vespucci began collaborating with merchants who supported Christopher Columbus ("Amerigo Vespucci," 2017). In 1491, Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco dei Medici assigned Amerigo Vespucci to the Seville branch of the bank under the patronage of Giannotto Berardi; this bank was the sponsor of the cruises of Columbus and Vespucci (Perini, 2013: XL).[20] Amerigo Vespucci went to Spain with his nephew Giovanni in 1490 or 1491; in 1492, in the Bahamas, the Spanish found precious pink pearls; in 1497, Vasco de Gama began to move towards Cathay, that is, northern China: the goal was always trade (Ober, 1907). In the 15th century, Italians tended to go the West to develop economically; developing Spain was a source of wool for Florentines (Fernández-Armesto, 2007: 44). Amerigo Vespucci also went to Seville to deal with trade (Fernández-Armesto, 2007: 44). The trade of olive oil, soap, textiles, wine, cereals, cattle, rabbit furs, fish, and pork products were Spain's livelihood (Fernández-Armesto, 2007: 47).

According to all his letters, it is assumed that Amerigo Vespucci went on four expeditions towards the American continent. It is claimed that he set out from Cadiz and reached Venezuela, and that he discovered this place a year before Christopher Columbus did. ("Amerigo Vespucci," 2017). His first voyage was on May 10, 1497 ("Amerigo Vespucci," 2017).[21]

[20] Perini, Leandro (Preparation and footnote explanations); Vespucci, Amerigo. 2013. "Introduzione – Cronologia – Indice delle Lettere" (IX - XLVIII). *Cronache Epistolari: Lettere 1476-1508.* Firenze [Florence]: Firenze University Press.

[21] However, since the 1920s, some historians have been suggesting that Amerigo Vespucci's letter to Pier Soderini on his four voyages and *Lettera delle isole nuovamente trovate in quattro suoi viaggi ["The letter about newly discovered islands"]* as well as "*Mundus Novus" ["The New World"]* written to Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco dei Medici between adlı 1502 and 1503 are fake (De Asúa ve French, 2016: 9-10). Despite this, it is accepted that Vespucci traveled to the coasts of South America on behalf of Spain with Alonso de Ojeda and Juan de la Cosa between 1499 and 1500 and made a

The second time he set out on a voyage, Amerigo Vespucci passed through the equator under the command of Spanish Alonzo de Ojeda in May 1499 and reached present-day Guyana ("Amerigo Vespucci," 2017). In 1499, Amerigo Vespucci, together with two Spanish sailors, Alonso de Hojeda and Juan de la Cosa, sailed on behalf of the Spanish and found Cabo S. Agostino (Portuguese full name: *Cabo de Santo Agostinho*; Italian name: *Capo di Sant'Agostino* [Cape of Saint Augustinus[22]]) and the Amazon coast, i.e., Brazil; they also visited the Canary Islands, Curaçao, and Haiti (Perini, 2013: XLI). In 1500, Amerigo Vespucci and his companions left Haiti and returned to Seville; in the month of July of the same year, Amerigo Vespucci wrote a letter to Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco dei Medici describing his journey in 1499 (Perini, 2013: XLI).

Amerigo Vespucci, who preferred a maritime career instead of trade, later started working for Portugal after the Spanish refused to employ foreigners in the Atlantic Ocean explorations (Fernández-Armesto, 2007: 89-90). In May 1501, on his third voyage, he sailed to Cape Verde for King Manuel I of Portugal and explored Rio de Janeiro and Rio de la Plata ("Amerigo Vespucci," 2017). In 1502, Amerigo Vespucci returned from this expedition and arrived in Lisbon; he wrote a letter to Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco describing the southern coast of America (Perini, 2013: XLII). In 1503, Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco, to whom Amerigo Vespucci wrote letters describing his travels, died (Perini, 2013: XLII). In Seville, an institution

trip to the coasts of Brazil on behalf of Portugal in 1501 or 1502 and lived with the Tupis there (De Asúa ve French, 2016: 9-10).

[22] St. Augustine, also known as Aurelius Augustine (354 - 430), was the forerunner of Descartes' later existentialism: he believed that human reason is superior to that of other beings; he argued that everyone's fate is predetermined ("Augustine" (354 — 430 C.E.)." 2017. *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*: http://www.iep.utm.edu/augustin/#H2 (accessed: 04/04/2017)). According to St. Augustine, philosophy is the method of understanding religion (Witmer-Kehr, 1916: 595; Witmer-Kehr, Marguerite. 1916. The doctrine of the self in St. Augustine and in Descartes. *The Philosophical Review* 25 (4): 587-615).

called "*Casa de la Contratación*" [House of Contract] was established to organize visits to the islands in the Indian Ocean (Perini, 2013: XLII).

On June 10, 1503, Amerigo Vespucci embarked on the fourth sea voyage of his life for Portugal: With Gonzal Coelho, he sailed again to Brazil and explored Bahia and South Georgia Island; he was asked to return to Portugal in 1504 ("Amerigo Vespucci," 2017). While some argue that he traveled with Juan de la Cosa in both 1505 and 1507, different scholars argue that the expedition in 1503 was his last ("Amerigo Vespucci," 2017). Giovanni del Giocondo translated Amerigo Vespucci's 1502-1503 letter to Lorenzo di Pierfranceso dei Medici into Latin under the title "*Mundus Novus*," meaning "New World" (Perini, 2013: XXV; Vespucci, 2013: 120-135). The *Mundus Novus* was prepared and published as a book in Paris by Félix Baligault and Jean Lambert (between 1503 and 1504); the book was printed in different European cities until 1507 in Venice, Rome, Augusta, Florence, Cologne, Nuremberg, Rostock, Strasburg, Antwerp, and Paris (Perini, 2013: XXV, XLII).

Additionally, Vespucci's letter to Pier Soderini about his four voyages, in which he wrote that he was aware that he had discovered a new land[23], was published in Florence in 1504 by Andrea Tubini and Andrea Ghirlandi and became known simply as the "*Letter to Soderini*" (Perini, 2013: XLII). Amerigo Vespucci became a Spanish citizen in 1505 ("Amerigo Vespucci," 2017). According to Amerigo Vespucci's letters, the routes of his supposed voyages to the Americas are shown in the map in Figure 3 below:

[23] See Vespucci, Amerigo; Perini, Leandro (Compiler). 2013. *Cronache Epistolari: Lettere 1476-1508.* Firenze [Florence]: Firenze University Press (Lisbon, September 4, 1504; pages: 136-165).

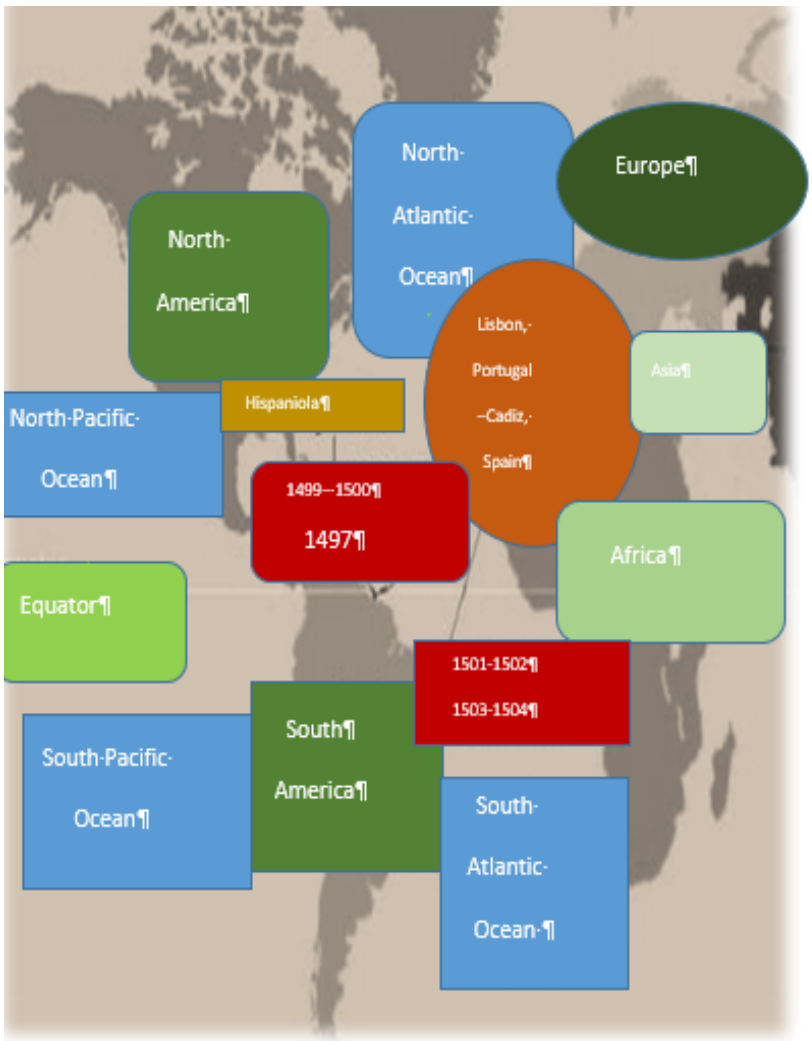

Figure 3. Amerigo Vespucci's travels[24]

At the end of the discoveries described by Amerigo Vespucci in his letters, Martin Waldseemüler, a German cartographer and one of the researchers working on a book of maps titled *Cosmographiæ Introductio* (*Introduction to Cosmography*) in Saint-Dié-des-Vosges in northern France in 1507, advocated the name "America" for Brazil: The Latin, Spanish and Italian word for land, "*terra,*" is a feminine noun; Waldseemüler, after feminizing the name "*Amerigo*" by ending it

[24] Eric and Madleine. 2017. Amerigo Vespucci: Vespucci's map of his four recorded voyages made on Microsoft paint. Web: http://ict-bvg.wikispaces.com/6BVespucci2009 (accessed: 04/04/2017).

with the letter '-a', proposes the name "America" for the land of Brazil alone, based on the word "Ameriga" ("Amerigo Vespucci," 2017).[25]

Amerigo Vespucci died of malaria on February 22, 1512 ("Amerigo Vespucci," 2017). After Vespucci's death, in 1569, the cartographer Gerhard Kremer (Mercator) drew and published a globe of the newly discovered continent, which he called "America" (Perini, 2013: XLIII) (see Figure 4).

In the late 15th and 16th centuries, most of the world's explorer seafarers were Spanish and Portuguese (see Appendix 2). By discovering new lands and water resources, they conquered the lands inhabited by the indigenous people in these places. In terms of environmental history, the names they gave to the new geographical shapes formed by lands or water they discovered are significant. The fact that they spread a European way of life in the places they discovered shows that they tended to use people and other living things that were different from them

[25] The first satirical account of the American continent and its discovery was written by Sebastian Brant, who lived between 1458 and 1521: Brant, Sebastian; Henry Watson. 1509. *The shyppe of fooles*. London: Wynky[n] de Worde (See Adams, Edward Dean. 1926. *America and Americans, the name, and its significance; patriotic research presented as an address to the members and guests of the engineering foundation, at a dinner in honor of Edward Dean Adams upon the completion of his ten years of service as vice-chairman, New York City, May 19, 1926.* New York: Privately Printed).

in the direction they wanted.

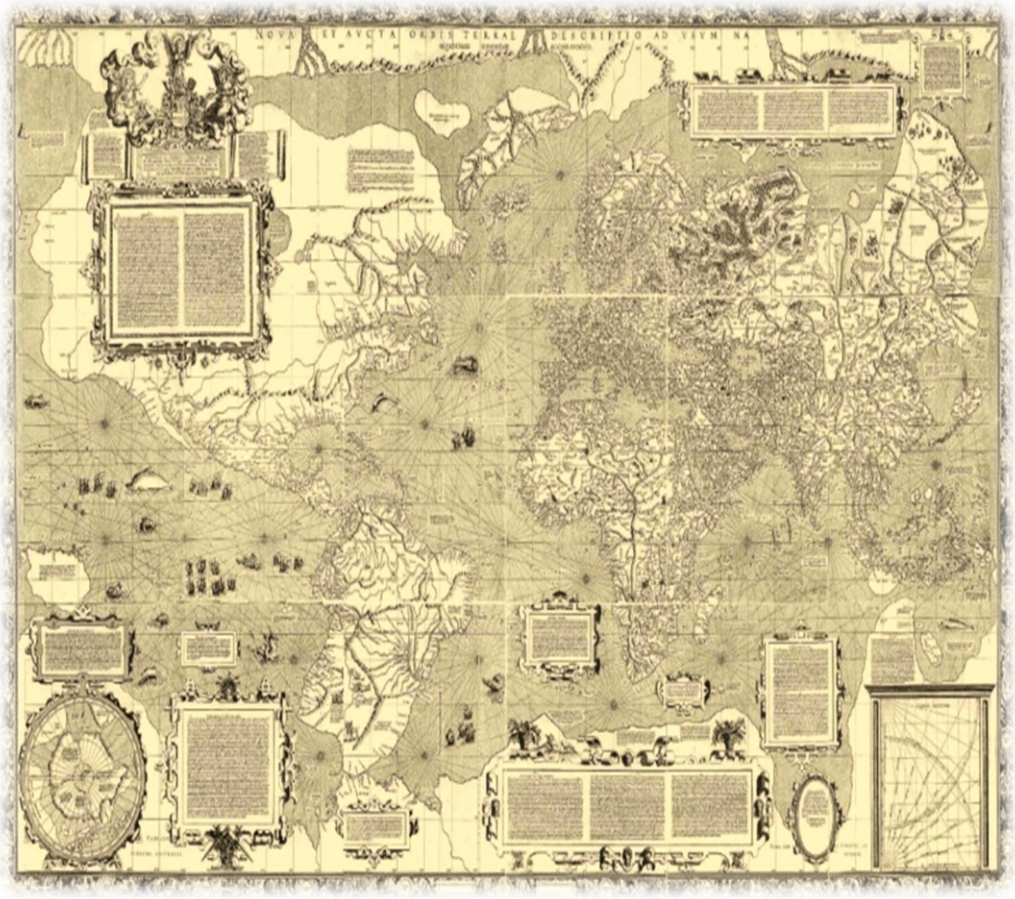

Figure 4. Mercator, Gherard. 1596. World map[26]

As Amerigo Vespucci's letters will be analyzed from the perspective of environmental criticism in this study, this theory and its historical development will be explained in the next section.

[26] Mercator, Gherard. 1596. *Carta do Mundo de Mercator* [Mercator's World Map]. *Wikimedia Commons*: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mercator_1569.png (accessed: 04/07/2018).

2. ANALYZING AMERIGO VESPUCCI'S LETTERS FROM AN ENVIRONMENTAL PERSPECTIVE

2. 1. Ecocriticism

In literary studies within the scope of environmental criticism, different branches of humanities can be used. Environmental critics can make interdisciplinary critiques of works from literary, anthropological, historical, geographical and philosophical perspectives related to the protection of the environment ("Ecocriticism and Environmental Humanities - ASLE," 2017).[27] According to Özdağ (2005a: 16-17),[28] environmentally critical texts and nature literatures emerge from the development of the industry as 'interdisciplinary' approaches, meaning that environmental critics draw on different disciplines to study and understand the connection between humans and nature (Özdağ, 2014: 32).[29] Scott Slovic (2008: 27)[30] indicates that environmental criticism can be applied to any disciplinary approach and to any work of literature (see Özdağ ve Gökalp-Alparslan, 2011: 642).[31]

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[27] "Ecocriticism and Environmental Humanities – ASLE." 2017. *Asle.Org*. Web: https://www.asle.org/explore-our-field/ecocriticism-and-environmental-humanities/ (accessed: 01/10/2017).

[28] Özdağ, Ufuk. 2005a. *Edebiyat ve toprak etiği: Amerikan doğa yazınında Leopold'cu düşünce*. Ankara: Ürün.

[29] Özdağ, Ufuk. 2014. *Çevreci eleştiriye giriş: Doğa – kültür – edebiyat*. Ankara: Ürün Yayınları.

[30] Slovic, Scott. 2008. *Going away to think: Engagement, retreat, and ecocritical responsibility.* Reno: University of Nevada Press.

[31] Özdağ, Ufuk; G. Gonca Gökalp-Alpaslan. 2011. "Türkiyat Araştırmalarında Yeni Bir Alan: Çevreci Eleştiri." *Orhon Yazıtlarının Bulunuşundan 120 Yıl Sonra Türklük Bilimi ve 21. Yüzyıl 3. Uluslararası Türkiyat Araştırmaları Sempozyumu (26-29 Mayıs 2010) Bildiriler Kitabı. Cilt II,* editör: Ülkü Çelik Şavk, 641–651. Hacettepe Üniversitesi Yayınları: Ankara.

Also, Emmett ve Nye (2017)[32] support the view that environmental criticism is interdisciplinary: since technology and science are not enough to understand today's problem of environmental destruction, research and case studies from different disciplines such as environmental history, anthropology, political science, literary criticism, etc. should be conducted to find solutions to problems such as climate change, species extinction, and depletion of natural resources. Environmental criticism can also be considered as a 'political movement' for a greener world (Özdağ, 2014: 32).

Regarding the historical development of environmentalism and nature literature, Henry David Thoreau, in his *Walden* (1854), first wrote about his days spent alone in a natural environment in a small cabin he built himself on the shore of Walden Lake in Massachusetts. It is argued that *Walden* approaches social problems from an environmental perspective (Emmett and Nye, 2017: 3), because it is assumed that Thoreau took responsibility for the preservation of the land where he lived, but he did not desire to own this land for material gain (Emmett and Nye, 2017: 28). George Perkins Marsh's *Man and Nature* (1864), published ten years after *Walden*, influenced Rachel Carson and is one of the first examples of environmentalist history, and Alexander Von Humboldt and Aimé Bonpland authored *Essay on the Geography of Plants* (1807) (Emmett and Nye 2017: 3-4). In addition, from the idea of 'white, male and European' forces exploiting the land to which people attributed the female gender, the concept of '*Anthropos*' (human being) was born (Emmett ve Nye, 2017: 4). Haraway (2004: 14)[33] argues that colonialism has triggered an awakening in people of an awareness of gender, race,

[32] Emmett, Robert S.; David E. Nye. 2017. *The Environmental humanities: A critical introduction.* Cambridge: The MIT Press.
[33] Haraway, Donna Jeanne. 2004. *The Haraway reader*. New York: Routledge.

and class distinctions. Consequently, issues such as 'ecological racism, environmental justice, environmentalism of the poor, and transhumanism' (Emmett and Nye, 2017: 4) have appeared in different humanities disciplines in response to the colonialist perspective of human beings towards nature. For example, in relation to ethics, law and geography, John Muir (1838-1914) started to advocate for the rights of nature in the 1870s: in his writings, he argued that people should be conscious of the environment (Özdağ, 2014: 7). Muir pioneered nature literature by striving for the preservation of the Yosemite Valley in California and discussing the nature of North America and Alaska (Özdağ, 2014: 9). In 1903, Mary Austin's *The Land of Little Rain* was published, explaining that people have some responsibilities towards nature and discussing the deserts in Southern California and the water problems in the Owens River Valley (Özdağ, 2014: 11). Kenneth Burke's *Attitudes toward History*, published in 1937, also plays an important role in environmental criticism; two pastoral works, *The Machine and the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in American Culture* (1964) by Leo Marx and *The Country and the City* (1973) by Raymond Williams are also significant (Burbery, 2012: 190).[34] Joseph Meeker's work titled *The Comedy of Survival* (1974)[35] is important for environmental criticism because it talks about the tragic destruction of nature by Western civilization (Buell, Heise ve Thornbell, 2011: 418).[36] Regarding the destruction of the environment tragically, for the first time, the term *'ecocriticism'* was proposed in 1978 by William Rueckert[37] (Özdağ, 2014:

[34] Burbery, Timothy J. 2012. Ecocriticism and Christian literary scholarship. *Christianity & Literature* 61 (2): 189-214.
[35] Meeker, Joseph W. 1974. *The comedy of survival: Studies in literary ecology*. New York: Scribner.
[36] Buell, Lawrence; Ursula K. Heise; Karen Thornber. 2011. Literature and environment. *Annual Review of Environment and Resources* 36: 417-440.
[37] Rueckert, William. 1978. Literature and ecology: An experiment in ecocriticism. *Iowa Review* 9 (1): 71-86.

32). In fact, species other than humans have rights (Özdağ, 2014: 32). According to Rueckert (1996: 113),[38] humans make mistakes by domesticating animals, being egoists without thinking about the needs of animals and plants and their conservation and thinking about their own needs.

It is observed that natural events such as the activation of volcanoes, the evolution of living species, the effects of sunlight on the earth, as well as the practices of humans on natural resources cause changes in the environment in global terms (Palsson, Szerszynski, Sörlin, Marks, Avril, Crumley, Hackmann, Holm, Ingram, Kirman, Pardo-Buendía ve Weehuizen, 2012: 4).[39] Human exploitation of nature can lead to changes in nature, and the ability of humans to exploit nature in this way depends on three different anthropocentric views: (a) humans can 'dominate' the environment: Carolyn Sigler (1994-1995)[40] suggests that according to an anthropocentric understanding, humans 'rule' over the environment and use the environment, its products and the land according to their needs (Martin, 2004: 217-218);[41] (b) humans can be 'caretakers' of the environment: humans protect the environment for specific purposes (Martin, 2004: 218); and (c) according to the biocentric conception, relationships between humans and other non-human beings are fundamental; humans make use of the environment

[38] Rueckert, William. 1996. Literature and ecology: An experiment in ecocriticism. *The ecocriticism reader: Landmarks in literary ecology*, editors: Cheryll Glotfelty; Harold Fromm, 105-123. Athens: The University of Georgia Press.
[39] Palsson, Gisli; Bronislaw Szerszynski; Sverker Sörlin; John Marks; Bernard Avril; Carole Crumley; Heide Hackmann; Poul Holm; John Ingram; Alan Kirman; Mercedes Pardo-Buendía; Rifka Weehuizen. 2013. Reconceptualizing the 'Anthropos' in the Anthropocene: Integrating the social sciences and humanities in global environmental change research. *Environmental Science and Policy* 28: 3-13.
[40] Sigler, Carolyn. 1994-1995. Wonderland to Wasteland: Toward historicizing environmental activism in children's literature. *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* 19 (4): 148-153.
[41] Martin, Michelle. 2004. Eco-edu-tainment: The construction of the child in contemporary environmental children's music. *Wild things: Children's culture and ecocriticism,* editors: Sidney Dobrin; Kenneth Kidd, 215-231. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

according to their wishes, with concern for their own health and the health of other living beings; products of the biocentric perspective include organic farming and the use of cleaning products that do not contain toxic chemicals (Martin, 2004: 218). Unlike anthropocentrism and biocentrism, ecocentrism strongly opposes the use of nature as a tool for human happiness and comfort (Şakacı, 2013: 9).[42]

In order to examine the existence and effects of views such as ecocentrism and anthropocentrism in the environmental criticism of literary works, the Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment (ASLE) was founded in 1992, the journal *ISLE* (*Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*) was published in 1993, and the first Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment (ASLE) conference was organized in 1995 (Özdağ, 2014: 35).

Buell divided ecocriticism into two waves as the first wave and the second wave in his book titled *The Future of Environmental Criticism: Environmental Crisis and Literary* and published in 2005: the first wave of environmental criticism was concerned with traditional nature literature, nature-centered works, natural history and the protection of natural areas, whereas the second wave of environmental critics dealt with issues of environmental justice (Özdağ, 2014: 37-38). According to Özdağ (2014: 38-41), who provides a deeper explanation of this issue, environmental criticism is directed towards the literature that emerged in different parts of the world in three different periods: (a) first wave environmental criticism (beginning in the 1980s), (b) second wave environmental criticism

[42] Şakacı, Bilge Kağan. 2013. Değer kavramı ekseninde derin ekoloji yaklaşımının çözümlenmesi [Analyzing the deep ecology approach on the axis of the concept of value]. *Mülkiye Dergisi* 37 (1): 9-29.

(beginning in the mid-1990s) and (c) third wave environmental criticism (which is still being defined today).

The first wave of environmental criticism in the 1980s perceives humans as 'part of the biotic community'; this belief of the 1980s is found in American and British nature literature, nature poetry, and fictional works about wilderness (Özdağ, 2014: 32, 38-39). Regarding the first period of environmental criticism, Barry Lopez published *Arctic Dreams* in 1986: this work is an example of nature writing (Özdağ, 2014: 23). In this work, Lopez (1986)[43] talks about the living conditions, wildlife, and animals in the Arctic from biocentric and ecocentric perspectives. Hoagland (1986),[44] who criticizes this work, posits that Lopez (1986) ignores the fact that Eskimos are prone to suicide or homicide; Lopez (1986), being a faithful traveler, said that all creatures exist in the image of God.

The second wave of environmentalist critical studies published in the 1990s, defined as the second wave, also encompasses studies of world literature, and focuses on urban spaces and natural areas that have been destroyed (Özdağ, 2014: 38-39). According to Özdağ (2014: 83), Yaşar Kemal's 1978 novel *Deniz Küstü* [*The Sea Sulked*] aims to raise the awareness of the entire world about the pollution of the seas and the threats to the lives of sea creatures.

In 1995, Buell, who published a book titled *The Environmental Imagination*, stipulates that in order for a work to be environmentalist, the following are

[43] Lopez, Barry Holstun. 1986. *Arctic dreams: Imagination and desire in a northern landscape*. New York: Scribner.
[44] Hoagland, Edward. 16/02/1986. From the Land Where Polar Bears Fly. *New York Times*: http://www.nytimes.com/books/98/12/06/specials/lopez-arctic.html (accessed: 06/12/2017).

obligatory: (a) the unity of human history and natural history, (b) the comprehension that humans are responsible for the environment, (c) the emphasis that human interests are not the only legal rights, and (d) the perception that the environment may undergo changes over time (Özdağ, 2014: 33).

In 1996, Cheryll Glotfelty's *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, co-edited with Harold Fromm (Burbery, 2012: 191) appeared. In the introductory article of this book, Glotfelty stated that there are some methods of environmental criticism: the environmental critic can question (1) how nature is represented in the works, (2) whether the values in the works are compatible with ecological virtue, and (3) how the metaphors about the earth shape the human attitude towards the earth (Özdağ, 2014: 36). The third wave of environmental criticism deals with dangers against nature such as "global climate change, the decline of biodiversity, threats to regional ecosystems, health problems due to environmental pollution," however, no scholar has been able to define it (Özdağ, 2014: 40-41). Opperman (2009: 6)[45] specifically states that environmental criticism examines "the symbolic meanings attributed to nature, the thought patterns formed by these meanings, how rivers, seas, soil and plant and animal species shape human cultures, how language is used, how environmental problems are approached, alongside value judgments and self-concepts within the text." For instance, regarding the use of language in texts, it is seen that the discourse of the text is important in terms of environmental criticism and can contribute to the field: Brett

[45] Oppermann, Serpil. 17/04/2009. Ekoeleştiri [Ecocriticism]. Web: http://www.pen.org.tr/files/GreenPEN%20Ekoele%C5%9Ftiri%20Prof.%20Dr.%20Serpil%20Opperman.pdf (accessed 04/04/2017).

Alan Werner (2010: 20)[46] explains that in his Ph.D. dissertation, *Pragmatic Ecocriticism and Equipments for Living* the discourse of a text about the environment will affect environmental criticism with the following three points*:*

1) Pragmatic explorations: pluralism, uncertainty, dilemmas, and moral teachings,

2) conversations on environmental crises, and

3) rhetoric: the effects of rhetoric on decision-making.

In the next section, the letters allegedly written by Amerigo Vespucci will be analyzed in the context of environmental criticism. The praise of nature in Amerigo Vespucci's letters and the commercial approach to the products of indigenous peoples' lands, which prepares today's destruction of nature, will be examined. In Amerigo Vespucci's letters, which will be analyzed in this section, it will be observed that while he admires nature in terms of animals, medicinal plants, and natural nutrition culture, he sees the natives as wild and primitive, because he finds it appropriate to exploit natural resources from a commercial point of view. By accessing sources that provide different explanations for Amerigo Vespucci's views, the methodology used for the writing of this dissertation was archival research conducted in November 2016 in the special collections of the Renaissance, European and American history departments of the Newberry Library in Chicago, as well as a literature search in the libraries of Ankara University and Middle East

[46] Werner, Brett Alan. 2010. *Pragmatic ecocriticism and equipments for living*. Doctoral Dissertation, Alan: Rhetoric and Scientific and Technical Communication. University of Minnesota, United States of America.

Technical University. In addition, nine letters supposedly written by Amerigo Vespucci were used as the data.[47] The letters were first translated into Turkish for the dissertation and then into English for its translation.[48] The analyzed letters of Amerigo Vespucci are listed below:

1) Letter of Amerigo Vespucci to his father Mr. Anastagio Vespucci in Florence (Trebbio del Mugello, October 19, 1476), pp: 3-4;

2) Amerigo Vespucci's letter to the viceroy of the duke of Mantua in Genoa (Seville, December 30, 1492), page 87;

3) Amerigo Vespucci's first letter to Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco dei Medici (Seville, July 28, 1500), pp: 88-101;

4) Amerigo Vespucci's second letter to Lorenzo di Piefrancesco dei Medici (Cape Verde, June 4, 1501), pp: 102-108;

5) Amerigo Vespucci's third letter to Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco dei Medici (Lisbon, 1502), pp: 109-113;

6) Amerigo Vespucci's letter to an unknown Florentine (probably 1502), pp: 114-119;

[47] The data book: Vespucci, Amerigo; Perini, Leandro (Compiler). 2013. *Cronache Epistolari: Lettere 1476-1508.* Firenze [Florence]: Firenze University Press.
[48] This translation work was done by Fazıla Derya Agiş.

7) Amerigo Vespucci's letter to Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco dei Medici entitled '*Mundus Novus*' [*'New World'*] (Lisbon, 1502-1503), pp: 120-135; in this letter, Amerigo Vespucci explains that he realized he had arrived on another continent;

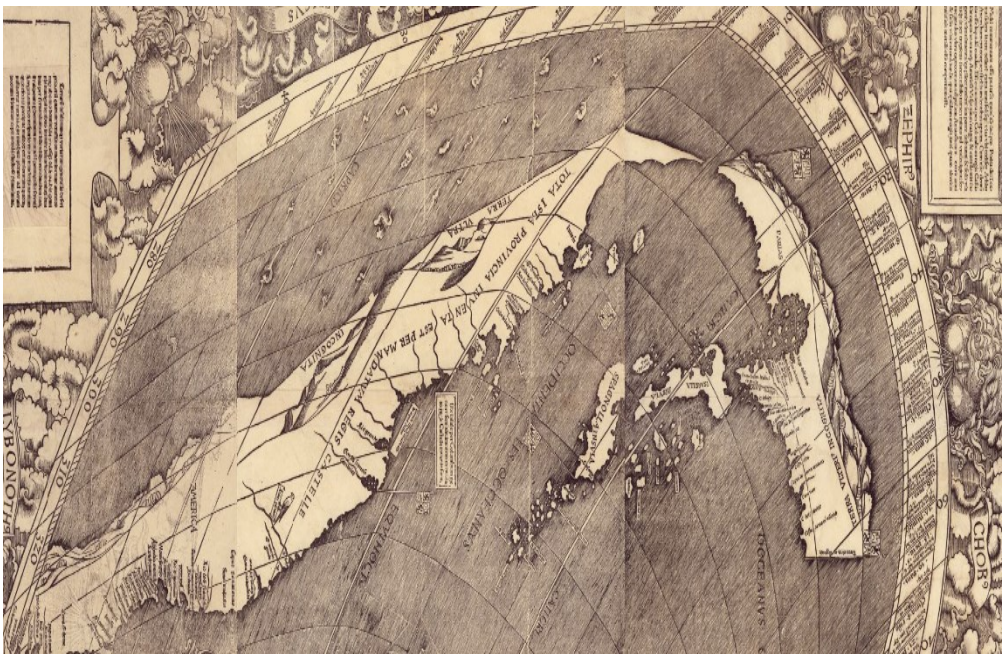

Figure 9. Martin Waldseemüller's Map of America (1507)[49]

8) Amerigo Vespucci's letter to the Florentine statesman Pier Soderini (Lisbon, September 4, 1504),[50] pp. 136-165; this letter describes in detail

[49] See Appendix 3.

[50] Roukema (1962) argues that the 1497 voyage that Amerigo Vespucci stated in his letter to Pier Soderini may have been included in the letter by someone else, giving the impression that Amerigo Vespucci sailed south from the Gulf of Honduras before Christopher Columbus: Columbus planned to sail on May 9, 1502, but was able to sail on May 11, 1502; taking this into account, Vespucci is shown as having sailed on May 10, 1497, and his 18-month voyage should be dated November 15, 1498, rather than October 15, 1498, as Vespucci states (See Roukema, Edzer. 1962. The mythical "First Voyage" of the "Soderini Letter." *Imago Mundi* 16: 70-75). Bartolemé de las Casas argues that Amerigo Vespucci, or those who published his letters, plagiarized from Christopher Columbus (de las Casas, Bartolemé. 2011. [EBook #36924]. "Chapters from Las Casas, which discuss the Statements of Vespucci: Las Casas on the alleged First Voyage of Amerigo Vespucci. I. - Chapter CXL.": para. 68-76. *The Letters of Amerigo Vespucci and other documents illustrative of his career*. Translator: Clements R. Markham. New York: Burt Franklin. Project Gutenberg: https://www.gutenberg.org/files/36924/36924-h/36924-h.htm#page1 (accessed: 03/03/2018)). According to Fernandez-Armesto (2013: 127), this letter may be a 'fabrication' because its Italian is corrupt, it was written under the influence of Spanish and even Portuguese, and it contains vulgar descriptions. Therefore, it is argued that this letter was written by others instead of Vespucci.

the ‘Four Voyages’ Vespucci m have undertaken; it is titled ‘*Lettera delle isole nuovamente trovate in quattro suoi viaggi*’ [‘Letter on the islands newly discovered in his four voyages’];

9) Letter of Amerigo Vespucci to Cardinal Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros (Seville, December 9, 1508), pp: 166-168.

Figure 10. From Europe to America, Martin Waldseemüller (1507)

2. 2. The Travels of Amerigo Vespucci: Geography, Cartography and Astronomy

Based on nine letters signed by Amerigo Vespucci, it is claimed that he made a total of four voyages to the Americas: (1) 1497-1498: Around the Antilles and South and Central America (Honduras and 870 leagues to the northwest, the Gulf of Mexico and the Chesapeake Bay) (Davies, 1952: 331)[51]; (2) 1499-1500: Brazil and Cape St. Augustine; (3) 1501-1502: Green Cape, Rio de la Plata and Rio de Janeiro (from Brazil to Patagonia) ("Tutti i viaggi dell'esploratore Amerigo Vespucci," 2017)[52] and (4) 1503-1504: Brazilian coast, Bahia and South Georgia Island ("Amerigo Vespucci," 2017).

There are those who argue that Vespucci reached North America (Christie, 1950).[53] There are also those who state that Vespucci reached South Georgia, although it is thought that he reached Patagonia or Tierra del Fuego: Matthews argues that Vespucci arrived here after Brazil, and a map of Antarctica printed in Canberra in 1939 suggests that this is possible (Christie, 1950).

Vespucci was not yet aware that he had reached a continent separate from Asia: Vespucci's term '*terra ferma*' (fixed land) means for Vespucci a new continent connected to Asia (Lehmann, 2013: 17-18).[54] Vespucci thought that he

[51] Davies, A. 1952. The "First" Voyage of Amerigo Vespucci in 1497-8. *The Geographical Journal* 118 (3): 331-37.
[52] "Tutti i viaggi dell'esploratore Amerigo Vespucci." 01/05/2017. *Panoram Italia: Living Italian Style*: https://www.panoramitalia.com/en/arts-culture/history/tutti-viaggi-dell-esploratore-amerigo-vespucci/4535/ (accessed: 04/07/2018).
[53] Christie, E. W. H. 1950. The supposed discovery of South Georgia by Amerigo Vespucci. *Polar Record* 5 (40): 560-564.
[54] Lehmann, Martin. 2013. Amerigo Vespucci and his alleged awareness of America as a separate land mass. *Imago Mundi* 65 (1): 15-24.

had reached the lands on the eastern shores of the Asian continent, which he did not think were islands because of the different animal life (Lehmann, 2013: 18). The source of this idea is Ptolemy's depiction of the Indian Ocean as an inland sea between the East and the West and Henricus Martellus's map showing that the Indian Ocean extends to the South (Lehmann, 2013: 18) (see Figure 7).

Figure 11. Map showing the Cape of Good Hope traveled by Bartolomeo Dias in 1488, other Portuguese discoveries, and the places indicated by Ptolemy; by Henricus Martellus Germanus, Florence 1489[55]

Vespucci sailed across the Atlantic Ocean in search of new trade routes, and accordingly, it was natural phenomena and winds blowing from various directions

[55] Henricus Martellus Germanus. About 1489. Martellus World-Map.jpg. *Wikimedia Commons*: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Martellus_World-Map.jpg (accessed: 03/03/2018).

significantly helped him navigate.[56] Amerigo Vespucci also explained the weather conditions of the places he found according to the positions of celestial bodies.[57]

2. 2. 1. Amerigo Vespucci, Winds and the Effect of Celestial Bodies on Climate and Weather

For Amerigo Vespucci, winds are natural forces that help people in their commercial work. For example, Vespucci, who first arrived in Gomera, one of the Canary Islands, recounts in his third letter that he realized as he was heading towards the island called Gomera and that the wind called '*libeccio*' was a refreshing means for the sailors to accelerate (Vespucci, 2013: 88). The Italian word '*libeccio*', which means southwest wind, the Ancient Greek equivalent *of 'libs'*[58] , has entered different languages: it is also used in English.

Secondly, Amerigo Vespucci (2013: 109), in his fifth letter, states that 'the wind blowing between the winds and noon' can reach a completely different continent, because it has the power to ease ship travel. As a merchant-minded sailor, Vespucci knows the names and the direction of the winds that nature puts at the service of people and helps people navigate their journeys. Therefore, he predicts

[56] According to Oppermann (1999: 43), winds, rocks and seas are seen as part of nature in environmentalist literary criticism (Oppermann, Serpil. 1999. Ecocriticism: Natural world in the literary viewfinder. *Hacettepe Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 16: 29-46).

[57] As an example of contemporary research on the effects of the position of celestial bodies on the environment, according to Kaza (2010: 304), environmentalist Rachel Carson argues that the distance of the moon and sun from the earth plays a role in the formation of tides (Kaza, Stephanie. 2010. Rachel Carson's sense of time: Experiencing Maine. *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* 17 (2): 291-315). Similarly, regarding the effects of celestial bodies on natural phenomena on Earth, Pliny, in his *Natural History*, in which he draws on the views of Amerigo Vespucci, explains that the moon, sun, stars and different planets have various effects on the structure of the earth, the formation of the seasons and the weather (See Gaius Plinius Secundus. 2017. *Doğa tarihi (I. ve II. kitap).* Translator: İnanç Pastırmacı. İstanbul: Say Yayınları).

[58] "*Libeccio*": Dictionary.com. *Collins English Dictionary - complete & unabridged 10th edition*. HarperCollins Publishers. 2017. Web: http://www.dictionary.com/browse/libeccio (accessed 04/04/2017).

that the wind blowing between the grizzly and the midday wind is different. Gaius Plinius Secundus (2017: 193), who influenced Vespucci, argues that it is assumed that there are "four types of winds in total, since they correspond to four geographical directions", but since this amount is insufficient, eight more types of winds are added to them. Pliny's explanations of the types of wind, translated by the Baconist, who preferred the word 'Greeks' instead of 'Ancient Greeks', are as follows:

> *"In this case, the [Eastern] Subsolanus blows from where the Sun rises at the time of the equinox*[59] *and Vulturnus [Southeast] from the place where it rises in the winter solstice.*[60] *The Greeks called Subsolanus 'Apeliotes' and Vulturnus 'Eurus.' At midday [South] Auster [and] Africus blows from where the Sun sets in the winter solstice. The Greeks call Auster 'Notos' and Africus 'Libs.' From where the Sun sets at the time of the equinox [West] Favionus blows and from where it sets in the summer solstice*[61] *blows [Northwest] Corus. The Greeks called Favionus 'Zephyrus' and Corus 'Argestes.' Septentrio*[62] *[North] from the direction of the stars of Ursa Major, and Aquilon [Northeast] blows between them and the place where the Sun was born in the summer solstice. The Greeks call*

[59] Approximately on March 20 or September 23; day-to-day equality.
[60] Approximately on December 21; winter solstice.
[61] Approximately on June 21; summer solstice.
[62] Great Bear.

Septentrio 'Aparctias' and Aquilon 'Boreas'" (Gaius Plinius Secundus; translator: Pastırmacı, 2017: 193).[63]

As it turns out, Amerigo Vespucci was a sailor with knowledge of astronomy and geography and aware of what Pliny had said. Amerigo Vespucci, who believed in the power of the winds, reveals in his seventh letter that he knew what Pliny had said: after departing from Lisbon on March 14, 1501, he said that they reached the Lucky Islands, now known as the Canary Islands, then reached the Cape Verde Islands and proceeded towards Antarctica in the direction of the *vulturnus* wind, but he also reported that they were exposed to rain and thunder (Vespucci, 2013: 129-130).

At this point, nature, depending on the celestial bodies, is now the source of events that need to be fought. So much so that Pliny (2017: 186) states that the causes of phenomena such as rain and storms are not entirely clear. But according to him, the sun regulates the seasons, and the movements of the stars lead to weather phenomena. For example, the star *Arcturus* causes hail, while the stars of *Suculae*, when stimulated by the planets' rays, make it possible for it to rain (Pliny, 2017: 187). All these events influence living things in nature. The issue that people want to learn and research on how the stars can help them is found in Dante's *Quaestio de Aqua et Terra* [*The Water and Earth Question*].[64] It can be said that Amerigo Vespucci was influenced by Dante.

[63] The translation was corrected by the author of this study.
[64] Alighieri, Dante. 1960. *Questio de aqua et terra in Le Opere di Dante*, editor: Ermenegildo Pistelli. Florence: Società Dantesca Italiana.

Taking into account the changes in nature caused by the stars, Vespucci argues in his sixth letter that two different hemispheres experience different seasons at the same times of the year: he mentions the tropics of Capricorn and Cancer and the zodiac signs, and explains with observational data that at the same time of year in the Northern and Southern hemispheres there are different seasons that affect the diversity of the vegetation and animals, which are the natural habitats of the regions; He even mentions the longest day and night:

> *"As I have told you before, in this sphere unlike in our sphere, the four times of the year come differently from one another, because when the sun enters the sign of Aries in the first degree, spring begins in our sphere, winter begins in theirs, and as a result, when the sun enters the first degrees of Libra and Capricorn, there are different seasons in two different hemispheres. Thus, in these regions, the longest day is 0/2 December, and the longest night is 0/2 June"* (Vespucci, 2013: 117).

In the same letter, Amerigo Vespucci also speaks with astonishment about the climatic conditions he believes are caused by the stars. Two different hemispheres experience different climatic conditions; Vespucci is in the Southern Hemisphere for the first time, talking about the solstices that occur approximately on December 20 and June 20, when he writes 0/2 instead of the number 20. Vespucci (2013: 119) is aware of the difference in climate in the Northern Hemisphere and the Southern Hemisphere. In his eighth letter, he refers to the differences in seasons in the two hemispheres: *"The nights were very long, for the*

night of April 7 was 15 hours long; this was because the sun was at the end of Aries, and it was winter in this region" (Vespucci, 2013: 161).

Moreover, in his third letter, Amerigo Vespucci (2013: 91) makes a latitude-longitude distinction and explains the time difference between the two hemispheres according to the positions of the shadows: he says that they have no shadows at all for an hour or two a day. With regard to what is described in this letter, the occurrence of different seasons in the two hemispheres depends on the position of the sun: since the sun's rays fall on the ground at different angles at different times of the year, it can emit different temperatures; therefore, seasons are formed (Tattini, 2009-2010: 106).[65] Since the earth rotates around its axis for a year, even if the earth always stands at the same point, the fall of the sun's rays to this point differs from day to day (Tattini, 2009–2010: 107).

Approximately on December 22, while night lasts longer than day at the North Pole, the sun's rays fall on the South Pole for twenty-four hours (Tattini, 2009–2010: 107). At the winter solstice, the sun's rays come at a right angle to the tropic of Capricorn at the South Pole (Tattini, 2009–2010: 107). On the summer solstice, which is the longest day at the North Pole on about June 21, the sun's rays fall on the North Pole for twenty-four hours, while they come at a right angle to the tropic of Cancer (Tattini, 2009–2010: 107).

Seasons occur with the angles of fall of the sun's rays to the poles (Tattini, 2009–2010: 108). With the month of March begins the spring season, and with the

[65] Tattini, Martina. 2009-2010. *Journey to discover the sky: A didactic proposal for primary school*. Undergraduate thesis, University of Florence, Florence, Italy.

month of September the autumn season, and in these months one day is the time of the equinox (Tattini, 2009–2010: 120).

Moreover, the Earth revolves around itself from West to East; this rotation lasts twenty-four hours and constitutes a day. The Earth completes its rotation around the sun in 365 days; in this way, a year is formed (Tattini, 2009 – 2010: 104). Amerigo Vespucci also explains that he witnessed this seasonal difference between the two poles in his travels.

Nevertheless, errors are bound to occur in Amerigo Vespucci's observations of cosmology, since his main occupation was seafaring, fraught with commercial concern, and he was not an astronomer (Fernández-Armesto, 2007: 79). However, according to the information he received from Ptolemy, it was a great achievement that he was able to calculate the longitude correctly in the sea (Fernández-Armesto, 2007: 81). Calculating time, the movements of the moon and other celestial bodies are considered. Amerigo Vespucci obtained tables from Nuremberg and Toledo showing time depending on the distance of the moon from other celestial bodies, and through these tables revealed the time difference between Nuremberg and Toledo (Fernández-Armesto, 2007: 82). Vespucci correctly establishes the longitude that Cape Verde is about 6 degrees west of the Canary Islands (Fernández-Armesto, 2007: 86). Therefore, in line with the limited technological possibilities of his time, Vespucci's research was appreciated. His main ambition is to obtain new riches from nature for commercial purposes and to present the places where these riches are found to the Europeans. Cosmology and space sciences clarify the changes of climates and weather today.

In this chapter, it is explained that Amerigo Vespucci used the power of the winds from natural phenomena to conduct his travels and knew how seasonal weather conditions were formed according to the positions of the stars in the sky. The next section will explain how Amerigo Vespucci made use of celestial bodies as a sailor for geographical decisions.

2. 2. 2. Amerigo Vespucci and the Importance of Celestial Bodies in Navigation

For Amerigo Vespucci, stars and planets are also helpful in finding earth. In his eighth letter, Vespucci describes how, during his travels, he found that stars appeared in the two hemispheres of different magnitudes in the evening, depending on the climatic conditions in distinct parts of the world:

> *"We went so far south that we went out of the Tropic of Capricorn; here the South Pole was rising at the 32nd degree of the horizon [...]. We were moving in the direction of the stars of the other pole, the South Pole, which were much, much larger, and brighter than our own poles"* (Vespucci, 2013: 160).

As these stars are imaged from different angles in different hemispheres, they make it easier to find directions. The Greek astronomer Ptolemy, from whom Amerigo Vespucci learned about the need to use the positions of the stars to find earth, was earth-centered, and according to him, the earth made life possible for living things through earth, water, fire, and air. There are seven planets, including

the sun and moon; the planets are surrounded by the Circle of Fixed Stars, which includes the zodiac signs in the zodiac; this is framed by *the Primum Mobile* [main force] circle; God moves the planets (Jokinen, 2012).[66] It is therefore inevitable that Amerigo Vespucci will also mention the stars in order to find direction while navigating the sea, which is evident in his third letter:

> *"We crossed the six-degree horizon line and lost the pole star altogether because the stars of the Little Bear, or better put, the two stars of the Great Bear orbiting the sky, were just appearing in the sky"* (Vespucci, 2013: 91).

In addition, Amerigo Vespucci, in the same letter, emphasizes that he observes the stars especially to determine their location and direction, saying, *"I have lost many nights of sleep to observe the movements of the stars of the other pole, to determine which one moves the least and which one is the fastest in the sky"* (Vespucci, 2013: 91).

Following this explanation, Vespucci writes that the instruments he uses to observe stars consist of various instruments such as '*quadrante' (quadrant)* and '*astrolabio'* (astrolalap) (Vespucci, 2013: 91). A quadrant is a tool used to measure the corner height of a celestial body, and an astrolabe is a tool used in the 2nd century BC to determine the location of objects in the sky and to learn the time at a certain place by means of longitude (Perini, 2013: 91). The idea of making astrolabes in ancient Greece belongs to Apollonius (circa 225 BC) and Hipparchus,

[66] Jokinen, Anniina. 31/01/2012. "Medieval cosmology." *Luminarium Encyclopedia Project*: http://www.luminarium.org/encyclopedia/medievalcosmology.htm (accessed: 03/03/2017).

who was born in the Nicaea region in about 180 BC (Morrison, 2016).[67] Also a guide to astrolabes is *A Treatise on the Astrolabe,* written by the English astronomer and writer Geoffrey Chaucer, [68] who lived between 1343 and 1400. Among the environmentally critical elements in this work, there are stars that can be observed with an astrolabe, the weather conditions caused by the sun and the moon, and the seasons and the vegetation as examined by Alias (2010-2011).[69]

In the third letter of Amerigo Vespucci, he was influenced by Fergani when he was planning to conduct his voyages: Vespucci (2013: 93) states that the explanation that *"according to Ptolemy and Fergani, the earth returns 24,000 miles, which is equivalent to 6,000 feris"* helped the sailors. The scientist[70] who wrote a detailed book about the astrolabe for the first time in the history of Islam was Fergani (Şen, n.d.).[71] The title of this book is *The Complete Guide to the Explanation of the North and South Directions in the Art of the Astrolabe with*

[67] Morrison, James E. 2016. The astrolabe. Web: https://www.astrolabes.org/pages/theastrolabe.htm (accessed: 03/03/2017).
[68] Chaucer, Geoffrey. [1391]. 1978. *A treatise on the astrolabe*, edited by Walter W. Skeat. Amsterdam: Meridian.
[69] Alias, Simona. 2010–2011. *An eco-critical approach to Chaucer. Representations of the natural world in the English literature of the Middle Ages.* Doctoral Program in Literature, Linguistics, Philology, 23. Semester, PhD Thesis, University of Trento, Italy.
[70] In addition, Fergâni has a book titled *Summary of Astronomy and Principles of the Movements of the Sky* (Unat, Yavuz. 1998. Fergani'nin "Astronominin Özeti ve Göğün Hareketlerinin Esasları" adlı astronomi eseri. *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih – Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi* 38 (1–2): 405 – 423:
[Unat, Yavuz. 1998. Fergani's astronomical work "A Compendium of Astronomy and the Essentials of the Movements of the Sky". *Ankara University Journal of the Faculty of Language, History and Geography* 38 (1–2): 405 – 423]).
[71] Şen, Mustafa. Usturlap okulu: Usturlaba dair herşey. n.d. Web: https://usturlapokulu.wordpress.com/ (accessed: 02/02/2017).
[Sen, Mustafa. The astrolabe school: All about the astrolabe. n.d. Web: https://usturlapokulu.wordpress.com/ (accessed: 02/02/2017).]

Geometry and Arithmetic.[72] In addition, al-Biruni describes the use of the astrolabe in his *Kitab al-isti'ab* (Glick, 2005: 90).[73]

In the third letter of Vespucci (2013: 99), it is understood from the sentence that another tool that he finds important to use is the 'compass': *"I have determined with the compass that we have traveled many times about 5000 leagues, which corresponds to 20 thousand miles."*

Vespucci's (2013: 100) plan to send two maps of the globe to the Florentine Francesco Lotti[74] and Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco dei Medici shows that he has just recorded the places he has visited.

In his seventh letter, Amerigo Vespucci recounts how he saw the stars to find locations and directions: Canopus is known as the colossal star of the Argonauts' ark with Giasone (Perini, 2013: 125). Pliny also mentions the star Canopus: he states that it was not possible to see the star Canopus from Italy during the time of Como Berenices and Augustine, but it was observable from Alexandria and Rhodes (Pliny, 2017: 220). The navigator Vespucci refers again to the different stars and Canopus to separate the poles:

> *"The Antarctic Pole, as seen from our North Pole, is not defined by the Great and Little Bear, nor is there a bright*

[72] Farghānī, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Kathīr. *Al-Kāmil fī ṣan'at al-asṭurlāb al-shimālī wa-al-junūbī wa-'ilalihumā bi-l-handasah wa-al-ḥisab.* Ref: Or 5479, ff 37V-85R. Web: Qatar Digital Library: https://www.qdl.qa/en/archive/81055/vdc_100030447153.0x000004 (accessed: 03/03/2018).
[73] Glick, Thomas. 2005. Biruni, Al- (Biruni and the West, 90). *Medieval science, technology, and medicine: An encyclopedia,* editors: Thomas F. Glick; Steven Livesey; Faith Wallis, 88-90. New York & London: Routledge, Taylor, and Francis Group.
[74] Francesco Lotti is a relative of Vespucci (Perini, 2013: 100).

star nearby; the stars that complete their tour as soon as possible gather around him; three of them form a vertically angled triangle; of these stars is a star of nine degrees in the middle, and its circumference is half that of the others; when these stars appear from the left, a white Canopus of considerable magnitude appears; stars form this shape when they come to the half of the sky" (Vespucci, 2013: 133-134).

Vespucci depicts Canopus with drawings:

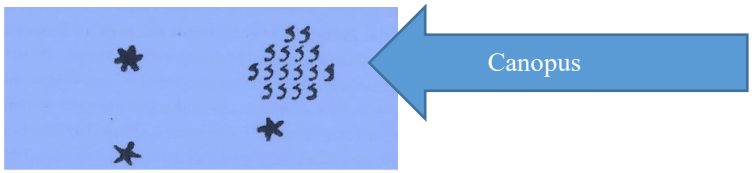

Figure 12. Canopus star (Vespucci, 2013: 126)

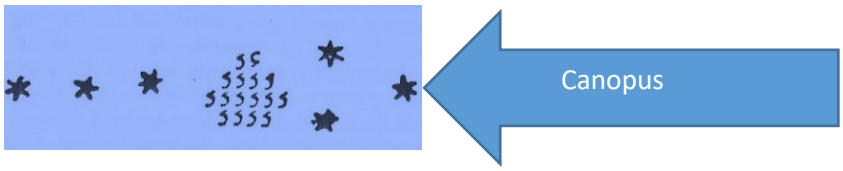

Figure 13. Canopus Star and the Milky Way (Vespucci, 2013: 126)

According to Amerigo Vespucci, influenced by Dante, the eighth circle in the sky is a celestial body in which the stars stand still, with one axis of rotation remaining in the North and the other in the Southern Hemisphere; Dante's *Convivio*, completed between 1304 and 1307 (Quinones, 2017), plays a role in Amerigo

Vespucci's determination of the positions of celestial bodies (Perini, 2013[75]: 126). In chapter XIV of the second book of *Convivio*, the source of Vespucci's knowledge of astronomy, Dante argues that the starry sky should be studied from the point of view of physics and metaphysics because of the many stars and galaxies; in the same chapter, according to Dante, Egyptian experts explain that there are 1022 stellar bodies (Alighieri, 1995).[76] In terms of the position of the stars, according to Dante, the celestial bodies closest to the earth are the sun, moon and planets, while there are two non-moving heavens: their positions are arranged as follows: the first has the Moon, the second has Mercury, the third has Venus, the fourth has the Sun, the fifth has Mars, the sixth has Jupiter, the seventh has Saturn, the eighth has the Fixed Stars, while the ninth sky is imperceptible, it is called *'Crystal'* and is completely or partially transparent; as a tenth heaven, one encounters the 'God's heaven' that is solid, i.e., the bright sky (Alighieri, 1995). According to Amerigo Vespucci's guide Ptolemy, there are Mercury, Venus, the Sun, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn outside the world, and they are in different heavens (Blair, 2015: 14-15).[77]

In the same letter, Vespucci says that one part of the new continent is still in the south and the other part in the north, and he reaches the South Pole with his companions through a star-based navigation system (Vespucci, 2013: 131).

Moreover, regarding Amerigo Vespucci's fourth letter, Perini (2013: 102) says that Vespucci gives the same information as both Ibn Battuta and Ibn Gubayr.

[75] Quinones, Ricardo J. 17/03/2017. "Dante's intellectual development and public career." *Encyclopædia Britannica*: https://www.britannica.com/biography/Dante-Alighieri/Dantes-intellectual-development-and-public-career#ref384935 (accessed: 26/08/2017).
[76] Alighieri, Dante. 1995. *Convivio*, edited by Franca Brambilla Ageno. Firenze [Florence]: Casa Editrice Le Lettere.
[77] Blair, Matthew. 05/2015. *Points and spheres: Cosmological innovation in Dante's Divine Comedy*, Baylor University, Honors Program, Waco, Texas, United States.

Ibn Battuta (1304-1377) has a work called *Riḥlah* (*Travelogue*): it goes as far as Islamic countries, Mecca, China, and Sumatra (Hrbek, 2016). Ibn Gubayr[78] was a 12th-century traveler who traveled to Mecca, Sicily, Syria, and Palestine (Ibn Ğubair [Ibn Gubayr], 1906).[79] Vespucci's fourth letter reveals that he was influenced by these two scientists; he also explains that the geographical information written in Ptolemy's *Cosmographia* is correct (Vespucci, 2013: 102). Ptolemy's mistaken geographical knowledge led to the discovery of America:

> *"The coordinates it gives are incorrect, as it cannot firmly figure out the initial meridian. His estimate of the size of the Earth is also inaccurate. However, Christopher Columbus, encouraged by this mistaken prediction, went to the West, and reached North America"* (Yıldırım, 2005a).[80]

Vespucci (2013: 103) writes that Ptolemy and certain astronomers referred to the place where the West ended as the Islands of the Lucky (Canary Islands in the Atlantic Ocean). Vespucci (2013: 103), who believes that the main reason for marine voyages is trade and that the positions of the stars should be used to find direction, as taught by Ptolemy, underlines that the thirteen ships of the Portuguese King, which set out in April 1499, proceeded to the place where the Islamic geography began: the influences of Ibn Battuta and Ibn Gubayr are understood at

[78] Hrbek, Ivan. 2016. "Ibn Baṭṭūṭah: Muslim explorer and writer." *Encyclopædia Britannica*: https://global.britannica.com/biography/Ibn-Battutah (accessed: 04/04/2017).
[79] ibn-ğubair, Muḥammad Ibn-Aḥmad. 1906. *Viaggio in Ispagna, Sicilia, Siria e Palestina, Mesopotamia, Arabia, Egitto: Compiuto nel secolo XII = Riḥlat ibn Ğubair.* Translator: Celestino Schiaparelli. Rome: Casa Editrice Italiana.
[80] Yıldırım, Ömer. 2005a. Klaudyos Batlamyus kimdir? Web: http://www.felsefe.gen.tr/klaudyos_batlamyus_kimdir.asp (accessed 02/02/2017) [Yıldırım, Ömer. 2005a. Who is Klaudyos Ptolemy? Web: http://www.felsefe.gen.tr/klaudyos_batlamyus_kimdir.asp (accessed 02/02/2017)].

this point. Vespucci refers to Father Gianni, the leader of a powerful Christian state in the east, to show that the ships sailed in the Islamic geography (Perini, 2013: 103).

Later, Amerigo Vespucci, in his eighth letter, after saying that they left the port of Cadiz on May 10, 1497, that their journey lasted eighteen months, that they had discovered *"an unlimited number of islands with one large fixed land,"* and that although there were people there, none of the ancient Greek and Roman writers mentioned these regions; besides, he explains why: "*because they had no news"* (Vespucci, 2013: 138). Vespucci (2013: 138) underlines that certain writers write that this ocean is desolate, and that Dante holds this view, as seen in the depiction of Ulysses' death in canto XXVI of the Hell section of *The Divine Comedy*. In this chapter, he Southern Hemisphere is mentioned as the 'other hemisphere,' and the illumination of the lower face of the moon five times is an expression indicating that five months have passed; also 'a black mountain' refers to Purgatory; Dante thinks that the Northern Hemisphere is made up of land and the Southern Hemisphere is made up of seas, but he argues that there is "Purgatory at the point in the southern seas that is the exact equivalent of Jerusalem" (Teksoy, 2011: 221)[81]:

Night shows the stars of the other pole.
I could see, our pole was extremely low,
it was no longer rising above sea level.

Since we embarked on this fearful journey,

[81] Alighieri, Dante. 2011. *İlahi Komedya* [*The Divine Comedy*]. Translator: Rekin Teksoy. 12th Edition Istanbul: Capricorn Publishing and Advertising.

the lower face of the moon was illuminated five times,

five times it had darkened,

A black mountain appeared in the distance,

it seemed so high to my eye,

I've never seen anything like it before.

We rejoiced at first, but tears of joy gave way to tears,

this is a new land-based hurricane.

He came and put us in front of our boat.

He turned the boat three times with the waters;

he lifted the pup into the air on the fourth,

as if, at the request of someone, the bow sank to the bottom,

finally, the sea closed in on us.

(Translated by Rekin Teksoy into Turkish from Italian, and from Turkish into English by me, Fazıla Derya Agiş, Purgatory*, The Divine Comedy*, Hell XXVI, 127-142, page 221)

Amerigo Vespucci refers to Dante's view and location of Ulysses' travel, stating that he saw the stars of the other pole south of the equator line (Fernández-Armesto, 2007: 106). It is inevitable that Amerigo Vespucci will set a travel route inspired by Dante's understanding of the universe; therefore, in this chapter, Dante's conception of the universe can be mentioned. Indeed, in *canto* XXVI of the

Hell section of the *Divine Comedy*, it is stated that Ulysses, King of Ithaca, and Diomedes, King of Argos, were punished for their evil Trojan horse plans in a flame; they presented the horse, which they placed opposite the Trojan walls, as a gift from God to the Trojans and captured the city with the soldiers they placed in it (Alighieri; translated by Teksoy, 2011: 217).

Sparavigna (2016) [82] states that Dante describes the polar stars in the chapter where he mentions Ulysses: Ulysses tells Dante about his last journey with his friends: as Ulysses moves toward the South Pole, he witnesses that the stars of the other hemisphere, the North Pole, no longer rise above the horizon; at the end of the five-month journey, he comes across a mountain; it is a mountain facing in the opposite direction: it cannot reach there because it has swallowed a large vortex ship; Dante reaches the cone-shaped Mountain of Purgatory; they have floors leading to Paradise. In addition, in canto I of the Heaven (Paradise) section of his work *The Divine Comedy*, Dante describes the equinox, that is, the equality of day and night (Teksoy, 2011: 545). According to Dante's conception of the universe, the North Pole is made up of earth and the South Pole is made up of water; there is an air sphere and another fire sphere; the moon, Mercury, Venus, the sun, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, and the Fixed Stars revolve around the earth (see Caetani and Passerini, 1921).[83]

As a result, Vespucci, who studied the skies, the planets, and the stars through the eyes of a merchant navigator, understood that in the Southern

[82] Sparavigna, Amelia Carolina. 2016. Physics and optics in Dante's Divine Comedy. *Mechanics, Materials Science & Engineering Journal, Magnolithe* 3: 186-192.
[83] Caetani, Michelangelo; Giuseppe Lando Passerini. 1921. *La materia della Divina Commedia di Dante Alighieri dichiarata in VI tavole*. Firenze [Florence]: Sansoni.

Hemisphere and in the Northern Hemisphere, the seasons and time were different, for him the stars are miracles of nature at the service of men to facilitate the finding of places and directions, and therefore, they are used to calculate directions by means of various tools such as the quadrants, the astrolabes, and the compasses.

Environmental historians, like Vespucci, shape people's life stories according to geographical, evolutionary, and time-based concepts based on the movements of the planets (Griffiths, 2001: 195).[84] In making plans for Amerigo Vespucci's travels, it is evident that he was inspired and made use of the following works by Latin writers that mention stars and other celestial bodies:

- Alphonsus X, *Coelestium Motuum Tabulae*, Venice, Ratdoldt, 1483 (letter 6);
- Ptolemy, Claudius, *Cosmographia*, Ulm, Reger, 1486 (letter 3);
- Catullus, *Carmina* (letter 8);
- Euclid, *Elementa*, translator L. Pacioli, Venice 1494 (letter 3);
- Pliny, *Historia Naturale*, Venice, Zani, 1480 (letter 7) (Perini, 2013: 171).

At the end of Amerigo Vespucci's expeditions, several geographical findings were reached: in 1507, a work entitled *Cosmographiae Introductio* [*Introduction to Cosmography*], containing an account of Vespucci's four sea voyages and a map in which Martin Waldseemüller called the new continent "America" (see Appendix 3), was published in Saint-Dié-des-Vosges (Perini, 2013:

[84] Griffiths, Tom. 2001. *Forests of ash: An environmental history*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

XLII). In 1515, Joachim von Watt published Amerigo Vespucci's '*Mundus Novus*' [*'New World'*], but he concludes that the earth is round (Perini, 2013: XLII).

Based on the travels of Amerigo Vespucci, in 1523, the philosopher Pietro Pomponazzi takes into acount Amerigo Vespucci's '*Mundus Novus*' ['New World'], since he did not accept the thesis that the lands in the region with a warm climate between the tropic of Cancer and the tropic of Capricorn were not suitable for settlement (Perini, 2013: XLII).

In the following chapters, Vespucci's admiration for nature in these lands he discovered with the help of the stars and the traces of today's destruction of nature will be examined in line with his commercial desires that contradict this feeling.

2. 3. Amerigo Vespucci's Wilderness Perception

Amerigo Vespucci's impressions of the American continent, which he saw for the first time, show that he admired wild animals and plants for their diversity. As well as seeing animals and plants as natural beauties, he finds plants valuable for human life as they are a source of healing and food. In this chapter, Amerigo Vespucci's admiration and praise of animals and plants will be analyzed.

2. 3. 1. Praise of Nature: Animals

In environmental criticism, the *'post-human'* understanding questions the distinction between human and non-human and emphasizes that the two groups are

influenced by each other (Iovino and Oppermann, 2012: 86).[85] Beings other than humans also have a social environment in which they interact culturally (Feder, 2014: 7).[86] It is understood from the following sentences in his fifth letter that Amerigo Vespucci, who divides animals in two groups as domesticated and wild, respects the diversity of animals:

> *"Who can tell us about the unlimited knowledge of forest animals, about the many lions and felines like the leopards that are no longer in Spain, and about the wolves, baboons, and monkeys like Cerberus,[87] which belong to many different genera on the opposite side of Spain? We also saw an abundance of huge snakes and animals of too many species to fit in Noah's ark. What about the hundreds of wild boars, roe deer, and deer, and hares and wild hares I have encountered? As for pets, we haven't seen one"* (Vespucci, 2013: 110).

As can be seen from the above part of the letter, the Christian education received by Amerigo Vespucci, who speaks of Noah's Ark, becomes known; he admires God's creativity as he writes these lines. In Spain, there are no wild animals

[85] Iovino, Serenella; Serpil Oppermann. 2012. Material ecocriticism: Materiality, agency, and models of narrativity. *Ecozon@: European Journal of Literature, Culture and Environment* 3 (1): 75-91.
[86] Feder, Helena. 2014. *Ecocriticism and the idea of culture: Biology and the bildungsroman.* Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate Publishing Company.
[87] Cerberus is known as the three-headed dog that stood guard at the gates of the underworld in Greek mythology; he was also the keeper of the circle of gluttons in Dante's *Inferno* (Dante*, Hell*, 6.13-33); in *Aeneis*, Virgilius depicts him as a terrifying creature with snakes around his neck (Virgilius*, Aeneis* 6.416-25) (See Liberal Arts, Instructional Technology Services. *Dante's Inferno, Circle 3, Canto 6,* "Cerberus" The University of Texas at Austin. n.d. Web: http://danteworlds.laits.utexas.edu/circle3.html#cerberus (accessed: 02/02/2017)).

from the American continent. Amerigo Vespucci's understanding of animals can be explained by his depiction of Noah's ark based on the culture he received: animals and humans are not seen as equal in Noah's Ark (Huggan and Tiffin, 2015: 181).[88] Özdağ (2005a: 25) explains that the controversy about the Judeo-Christian tradition containing ideas that cause the destruction of nature today originated from Lynn White (1967), who says that the Bible contains ideas that cause the destruction of nature (in the *Old Testament* section *Genesis,* which explains that all beings in the world in the *Torah* are created in the service of humans). According to Burbery (2012: 197), Lynn White, in her essay "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis*,"* first published in 1967, explains that nature existed in service to humans from the story of Adam and Eve, mentioned in the *Old Testament* chapter of *Genesis*. Humans' ability to dominate nature can be seen in the fields of science, technology, and agriculture (White, 1996: 4-5).[89]

It is also clear that Amerigo Vespucci was inspired by the part of the Bible (*Old Testament*) in *Genesis* where Noah's ark is depicted. For example, in the Bible, God commands Noah that animals should not become extinct in the world: "In order that they will not become extinct on earth, take with you seven pairs of clean male and female animals, and, another pair of animals considered unclean, and seven pairs of birds" (*Genesis*, VII – 2-3).[90] Amerigo Vespucci also grouped different species of animals in the above letter, indicating that animals have a social

[88] Huggan, Graham; Helen Tiffin. 2015. *Postcolonial ecocriticism: Literature, animals, environment*. London: Routledge.
[89] White, Lynn. 1996. The historical roots of our ecologic crisis. *The ecocriticism reader: Landmarks in literary ecology*, editors: Cheryll Glotfelty; Harold Fromm, 3-14. Athens: University of Georgia Press.
[90] Translated from Turkish by me from *Kutsal Kitap: Eski ve Yeni Antlaşma (Tevrat, Zebur, İncil). Eski Antlaşma.* 2014. İstanbul: Kitab-ı Mukaddes Şirketi & The Translation Trust / Yeni Yaşam Yayınları [*The Bible: Old and New Testaments (Torah, Psalm, Bible). The Old Testament.* 2014. Istanbul: Kitab-ı Mukaddes Şirketi & The Translation Trust / Yeni Yaşam Yayınları].

environment specific to their species; Vespucci is on a different continent that looks like heaven on earth. The environmentalist Ponting (2000: 127)[91] mentions that in the Bible, Adam gave the animals their names; he emphasizes that after the flood, Noah and his family were informed that all animals were in their service. In the *Genesis* section of the Bible concerning Noah's ship travel, it is seen that animals are divided into two groups as domestic and wild environment animals: those who fly, those who live on land and in water, are grouped into three subgroup: "With them all kinds of animals—all kinds of domestic animals, reptiles, creatures flying with birds—boarded the ship" (*Genesis*, VII - 14).

Amerigo Vespucci is amazed to encounter distinct kinds of animals in the other hemisphere. In his eighth letter, he again speaks of animals with admiration:

> *"This land is very crowded and human swarming, there are an unlimited number of rivers, but animals are few. They resemble ours except for lions, leopards, gazelles, pigs, goats, and deer; they're also shapeless. They have neither horses, nor mules, nor donkeys, nor dogs, nor feathered animals, nor young buffalo calves, but they have other animals, and they are all wild, their numbers are endless; they don't use any of them to serve themselves. So, what do we say about birds? They are quite numerous, they belong*

[91] Ponting, Clive. 2000. The *green history of the world: The environment and the collapse of great civilizations.* Translator: Ayşe Başçı-Sander. Istanbul: Sabancı University.

> *to many species, and it is wonderful to look at the colors of their feathers"* (Vespucci, 2013: 147-148).

Amerigo Vespucci, who witnesses the existence of different wild animals in the American continent, is amazed by the biodiversity in the American continent. For example, parrots fascinate him with their colors: Amerigo Vespucci mentions parrots in terms of biodiversity in his third letter:

> *"What I saw were an unlimited number of species of birds of different shapes and colors, and so many parrots, and so many species that they were extraordinary: some were bright red; others were either green, motley, or lemon yellow; others were entirely green, black, or tan. The singing of the other birds in the trees was so sweet and so melodious that many times we stopped and listened to them for their sweetness [...]"* (Vespucci, 2013: 90).

Amerigo Vespucci is amazed by bird species and parrots; he listens to them singing. The species of animals in that region, as well as the trees and their fruits, are different from those in Europe; diverse types of fish swim in rivers (Vespucci, 2013: 90). In his seventh letter, Vespucci describes animals and refers to Gaius Plinius Secundus as *"Our Pliny."*[92] He goes on to describe his admiration for diverse kinds of animals and plants:

[92] See Gaius Pliny Secundus. 2017.*Doğa Tarihi (kitaplar I ve II)* [*Natural history (books I and II)*]. Translator: İnanç Pastırmacı. Istanbul: Say Publications. Book VIII of the original work contains information about elephants, lions, snakes, bisons, bears, tigers, rhinos, lynxes, donkeys, hippopotamuses, crocodiles, mice, hedgehogs, snails, lizards, dogs, monkeys, rabbits, horses, goats, and pigs, as well as semi-wild, endemic, and alien animals (Pliny, 2017: 33-37). Book IX of the original work contains information on aquatic animals, fish species, pearls, and the dyes *Amethystus*,

> *"In these countries, not even Polyclitus, a craftsman with rare talents, could depict monkeys, birds, and other animals of various appearances and colors. There are all the fragrant trees, and each one gives gum, oil, or sherbet [...]"* (Vespucci, 2013: 133).

Amerigo Vespucci (2013: 133) thinks that natives do not hunt, because animal species are diverse. Vespucci also admires the climatic conditions that make it possible for unusual species to live: "*There the rain falls thinly, lasts for three or four hours, and evaporates as fog*" (Vespucci, 2013: 133). Polykleitos, who is mentioned in the letter, was a famous Greek sculptor (Perini, 2013: 125).

Also, Amerigo Vespucci, in his eighth letter, tells us that on their way to Cape Verde, they collected birds to be domesticated to take to Europe; other animals around are wild:

> *"We returned to the island in my spare boat and took water and firewood. We found this island uninhabited, but there was a lot of living and fresh water there, and an unlimited number of trees; we have seen too many sea and land birds to count; also, these birds [...] allowed us to take them in our hands; we took a lot of them and filled the boat with them. Of the wild animals, we saw no other animals than*

Tyrius, and *Hysginos* used in clothing coloring (Pliny, 2017: 37-41). Book X of the work is about birds and book XI is about insects (Pliny, 2017: 41-53).

huge mice, two-tailed green lizards, and few snakes" (Vespucci, 2013: 163).

The pristine nature and unextinct animal species that Amerigo Vespucci depicts in his letters above prove that Native Americans protected animals, plants, and nature. In fact, Vespucci's main goal is to learn how to take advantage of his animals, whose appearance he admires for the land he just encountered, because he was originally a merchant; it is evident that he was influenced by the Roman writer, whom he called "*our Pliny"* in his own words, because Pliny (2017: 113-128) depicts medicines derived from animals in books XXVIII, XXIX, XXX, XXXI, and XXXII of his *Natural History*; Pliny (2017) argues that various medicines can be obtained from crocodiles, hippopotamuses, lynxes, pigs, deer, hares, cats, monopolies, sea hares, sea breams, snakes, and birds.

2. 3. 2. Praising Nature: Nature for Healing

Amerigo Vespucci learns from the natives of the Americas different methods of disease healing from those practiced in Europe, but first, the cleanliness of the air is a prerequisite for the health of people. In his fifth letter, he states that the natives of the land he has just set foot in are extremely healthy, because the air is clean:

"As for the availability of the soil, I say it is very pleasant, moist, and healthy, because in that weather we made our way through this land, and 10 months passed, no one among us died, and very few people got sick. As I have said,

> *they live for an exceedingly long time and do not suffer from severe diseases, nor do they suffer from the deadly plague or respiratory irregularities due to air pollution; their death was either by natural causes or by suffocation"* (Vespucci, 2013: 113).

In his seventh letter, Amerigo Vespucci describes the cleanliness of the air and the fact that the reason is the direction in which the winds blow:

> *"The air there is very warm and beautiful, and as far as I can tell from what he told me, there are no plagues or diseases caused by air pollutio; if people don't die as a result of violence, they live a very long time; the reason for this is that there the winds always blow from the south, and above all, the wind, we call Eurus, is like Aquilon for us"* (Vespucci, 2013: 132-133).

Women in South America *"live for one hundred and fifty years, rarely get sick, and if they suffer from some intractable disease, they are cured only by plant roots"* (Vespucci, 2013: 132). As it is understood and known from what Amerigo Vespucci wrote in his first letter, plague in Europe was the most terrible disease of the period (Vespucci, 2013: 4).

Amerigo Vespucci, in his eighth letter, summarizes the natural remedies practiced by the natives as follows:

> *"They use a variety of drugs that are very different from ours; for I have often seen that when a high fever patient has a fever, they wash him with cold water from head to toe; and then they light a great fire around him, turn him over for two hours until he is exhausted, and then put him to sleep. Eventually, many people are recovering. They very often follow a diet, stopping eating for three days. On this occasion, they are freed from blood irregularities [...]. They facilitate vomiting with herbs that they place in the patient's mouth; it takes a long time to count the other treatment methods they use"* (Vespucci, 2013: 142-143).

In the same letter, Vespucci says that the natives harm their bodies with the food they eat because these foods do not grow in the fields like wheat; the natives do not know how to dry the grass and make condiments, they eat the roots of the grasses and fruits they collect from their natural habitat, as well as the fish they catch; they consume the root of the yucca tree instead of wheat flour[93]:

> *"Often, because of the grass roots, fruits and fish that are their food, they sin a lot against their bodies and blood. They have neither wheat seeds nor dry grass. In common, they are accustomed to eating the root of a very tasty tree, which they have turned into flour, and they call it a 'yucca*

[93] Pliny (2017: 53-70) talks about the nature of trees in his Book XII of his *Natural History*, exotic trees such as dates, meninges and carobs in his Book XII, fruit-bearing trees such as vine trees in his Book XIV, the structure of fruit trees in his Book XV, the properties of wild trees in his Book XVI, and the care of planted trees in his Book XVII.

tree,' another type of tree 'cassava,' and a tree of a different kind 'inga'" (Vespucci, 2013: 143).

In addition, Vespucci (2013: 117) writes in his fifth letter that trees with aromatic odors that 'spontaneously produce either liquor, rubber, or oils' are abundant in South America.

Surprised that the natives lived long, got rid of diseases with herbs, and ate human flesh, Vespucci decided to keep an observation book, according to what he recounts in his eighth letter*: "In the end, since I saw things very different from ours on these four trips, I decided to keep a notebook, which I call 'Four Days'"* (Vespucci, 2013: 143).

Amerigo Vespucci never thought that healing resources in nature could have rights. It is possible that Vespucci, who is thought to have read books XII, XIII, XIV, XV, XVI, XVII, and XVIII of Pliny's *Natural History*,[94] had information about the types of trees, garden crops, sugar canes, spices, wood products, gums, olives, pine nuts, parasitic plants, grafting methods, and grain species, and their uses, and the plants he found in the American continent were also sources of commercial gain that could be offered to Europe. Yet today there are environmental critics, such as Stone (1972: 464),[95] who argue that the grievances of natural objects such as forests or streams that humans pollute, or damage should be specified by law.

[94] Gaius Pliny Secundus. 2017. *Doğa tarihi (kitaplar I ve II)* [*Natural history (books I and II)].* Translator: İnanç Pastırmacı. Istanbul: Say Publications; pages 53 – 73.
[95] Stone, Christopher D. 1972. Should trees have standing? – Towards legal rights for natural objects. *Southern California Law Review* 45: 450-501.

2. 3. 3. In Praise of Nature in Amerigo Vespucci: Natural Nutrition Culture

After Amerigo Vespucci, in his fifth letter, says that the natives have no laws and no religion, that they live 'by nature' and that their huts, which fit about six hundred people, do not contain metal, and that they sleep on cotton without covering themselves, Amerigo Vespucci begins his study of the natural nutritional culture of the natives with their eating style and counts the foods they ate:

> *"They eat sitting on the ground. Their food is the roots of many herbs and very tasty fruits, an unlimited number of fish, a large amount of seafood, sea urchins, crabs, mussels, grasshoppers, shrimps and many more seafood"* (Vespucci, 2013: 111).

From Amerigo Vespucci's letter, it is understood that the Atlantic Ocean is extraordinarily rich in seafood. But since they are often consumed, their number has steadily declined over the centuries. For example, observations of marine creatures in the Caribbean show that since 1492, the number of fish has declined and rare species are threatened with extinction (Holm, Marboe, Poulsen and MacKenzie, 2010: 15).[96]

[96] Holm, Poul; Anne Husum Marboe; Bo Poulsen; Brian R. MacKenzie. 2010. Marine animal populations: A new look back in time. *Life in the world's oceans: Diversity, distribution and abundance*, edited by Alasdair D. McIntyre, 1-24. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Amerigo Vespucci, in his fifth letter, does not give the order of the foods that the natives consumed in their meals, although he argued that the natives consumed fruits, vegetables, fish, and meat in South America, which he saw for the first time. However, from a single sentence in his third letter, it is understood that there is a feeding tradition in Europe and that fruit is eaten after meals: "*Instead of eating fruit after your meal [...], read my letter"* (Vespucci, 2013: 88). Also, in the same letter he explains that the fruits of the trees emit different smells; These are relieving people spiritually:

> *"After seeing the land, we thanked God and jumped out of the boats [...]. We were with 15 men and found this place to be a place full of dense trees, very charming not only in size but also in its foliage, it never had any leaves falling off and a sweet smell was emanating from them, it was all aromatic; they gave comfort to those who inhaled them, as well as great peace to us"* (Vespucci, 2013: 89).

Although Vespucci and his friends were not startled by the trees and could not enter the forest, they met their need to drink water; Amerigo Vespucci admires natural water sources: they fill their bottles with 'water as fresh as river water'; they proceed towards *Sinus Magnus*, which Ptolemy called Cape Cattigara (Vespucci, 2013: 89).

In his seventh letter, Amerigo Vespucci speaks of the fertility of the soil of the American continent and the different crops grown here than the ones to which they are accustomed:

> *"This land is very fertile, having many hills, mountains, valleys and rivers [...]. It is covered with forests with large and dense trees, which are almost impenetrable and filled with all kinds of wild animals. These large trees grow without pruning; these trees give fruits that are pleasing to the palate and nourish the human body; none of them are harmful. They are nothing like those in our countries. There is also an unlimited variety of fruits and herbs from which the locals make bread and amazing dishes. They also have many seeds that are not like ours"* (Vespucci, 2013: 133).

According to Amerigo Vespucci (2013: 144-146) in his eighth letter, when they move eighty leagues away from Venezuela, their friends who stayed on the ship in a settlement they arrived at began to doubt whether those who went to the areas inhabited by the natives survived. They are surprised by the abundance of food at the ceremony they attend, and the locals know how to organize a celebratory dinner, albeit in a primitive way:

> *"After staying here for about three days, we came across a very crowded community three leagues from the sea and with few houses, and the number of their houses was not more than nine. The ceremonies we were welcomed to were so barbaric that I cannot afford to describe them: there were dances, songs, ceremonies mixed with joy and tears, and many meals"* (Vespucci, 2013: 146).

Although these locals are primitive, they cook very tasty and healthy fish. Among the food that the natives eat are small fish, which they make into bread; They consume fish not raw, but cooked:

> *"We found out that they made bread from small fish they caught from the sea, first they boil the fish, then they made dough or bread from them and fried them in ember flames and ate them. We tried it and found the fish cooked this method to be delicious"* (Vespucci, 2013: 146).

In the same letter, Vespucci states that due to the mild climate in the region, he admires the trees that can remain lush in all seasons, the fertile soil and the fruits that are not found in Europe:

> *"The land is very pleasant and exhausting, full of great forests and groves; always lush, because the leaves do not fall off. The fruits are so numerous that they are impossible to count and different from ours"* (Vespucci, 2013: 148).

Vespucci also admires the natural umbrellas that the locals use while fishing:

> *"While they were fishing in the sea, they all held a leaf so large and wide that they were in the shade under it and fixed it in the ground; when the sun's rays came upon them, they turned the leaf and protected themselves from the sun"* (Vespucci, 2013: 154).

Vespucci mentions that there were locals on an island they went to who quenched their thirst by chewing grass:

> *"Their mimics and faces were very ugly, and the inside of their cheeks were swollen from a weed that they were constantly chewing on like animals. They could hardly speak. They all had two dried pumpkins hanging around their necks; in one there was a white powder which looked like this herb, and in the other like flour [...]. They crushed the grass they held in their mouths and kept it in their cheeks; they often did this [...]"* (Vespucci, 2013: 153-154).

Just as Vespucci understood that this flour-soaked herb was a plant used to quench thirst, he found fish and dewdrop water, the only food source of the island's inhabitants, very tasty:

> *"With these people [...] we became friends. On the beach [...] they pointed out to those of us who wanted to drink water while walking with them that they had no water, and they brought us their grass and flour; we concluded that this island was deprived of water, and they kept it in their mouths to protect themselves from thirst; flour worked the same way. We wandered around the island for a day and a half without finding water; we finally learned that the only water they drank was dew, which resembled donkey ears at night and [...] fell on some leaves. They were drinking this:*

> *it was the best water. Not many of these leaves were on the ground either. There were no diverse types of food and plant roots to eat; just like on land; their lives depended on the fish they caught from the sea [...]. They presented us with turtles and a very tasty huge fish"* (Vespucci, 2013: 154).

When the habit of the natives to eat together is mentioned, Amerigo Vespucci, in his third letter, describes it as polite for the natives to invite them to eat, and therefore writes that they do not touch their possessions (see Vespucci, 2013: 94). Vespucci thinks that the locals are full of love because when they arrive in the Gulf of Parias, the people of this place also invite them to dinner; they also find their wines made with barley and oats, which are useful cereals, and delicious; this wine is *"not made from grapes, but from products such as barley and oats, and is very tasty"* (Vespucci, 2013: 95).

Vespucci (2013: 95) explains that the natives offered them many fruits, which differed from those in Europe in shape, taste, and aroma. After the locals present them with colorful parrots as a symbol of friendship, they leave the Gulf of Parias (Vespucci, 2013: 95).

Amerigo Vespucci (2013: 97) talks about the beauty of trees that have not yet been touched by human hands. The natives of Curaçao have cotton in their wooden houses. On leaving the island, Vespucci and his companions took cotton and a plant called '*verzino'* ('logwood wood'*),* which they used to make houses and

was also used as a dye[97] (Vespucci, 2013: 97-98). The use of this plant was widespread during the Renaissance; a 15th-century manuscript found in the Abbey of St. Salvatore in Bologna also describes it as being used to make *the 'logwood tree/wood colour'* (Merrifield, 1999: 441).[98] The Latin equivalent of the plant's name appears to be '*verxillium' or 'verzilium'* (Merrifield, 1999: XXXIII). Marco Polo's statement that this plant was best grown in Colombo, Ceylon, at that time led to the fact that the paint used in paintings made in Venice was known as '*verzino colombino'* ('Colombian logwood wood') (Merrifield, 1999: CLXXX). The word enters English as *'logwood (wood)'*; it also has another Latin name, '*Caesalpinia slingshot*'; it is a plant species with thin leaves and large yellow flowers; in the Middle Ages, a small number of logwood trees were brought from distant countries as wood, but Portuguese traders came across this plant on the Atlantic coast of South America in the 1500s and called it '*Brazil*'; the name of Brazil tree is given to this plant later; it was used in red dyeing until the beginning of the 20th century (Geleneksel El Sanatları ve Mağazalar Müdürlüğü [Directorate of Traditional Handicrafts and Stores] (GES), 2009).[99]

In his fourth letter, Vespucci states that ships were made of wood, which was not only used to obtain fruit, but was also used to make wooden objects and

[97] Italian-English translation for "verzino." Verzino - English translation - bab.la Italian-English dictionary. Web: http://en.bab.la/dictionary/italian-english/verzino. Oxford University Press (accessed: 30/05/2017).
[98] Merrifield, Mary P. 1999. *Medieval and Renaissance treatises on the arts of painting: Original texts with English translations*. Mineola, N.Y.: Dover Publications.
[99] Geleneksel El Sanatları ve Mağazalar Müdürlüğü (GES). 2009. Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, Türk El Halıcılığı Projesi. "Bakam odunu (*Caesalpinia sapan L.*)." Web: http://www.turkelhalilari.gov.tr/sayfalar.php?language=tur&icerik=dogalboyamacilik/bakam-odunu (accessed: 31/05/2017) [Directorate of Traditional Handicrafts and Stores (GES). 2009. Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Turkey, Turkish Hand Carpet Project. "Bakam wood (*Caesalpinia slingshot L.*)." Web: http://www.turkelhalilari.gov.tr/sayfalar.php?language=tur&icerik=dogalboyamacilik/bakam-odunu (accessed: 31/05/2017)].

tools (Vespucci, 2013: 107). Amerigo Vespucci (2013: 107) tells us that these ships belonging to the Portuguese carried riches due to the exploitation of nature and even *'a good worth of 100,000 ducats'* was lost. Among these natural riches he mentions spices and vegetable oils, which are natural sources of food; it turns out that foods are just as valuable as gems like diamonds, because they can all be traded:

> *"The goods carried by the said vessels are the following: an unlimited number of cinnamon, green and dried ginger, a lot of peppers, cloves, muscat, muscat bark, muscat, musk oil, sun nuts, benzoin, porcelain pieces, cinnamon, gums, frankincense and myrrh, red and white sandalwood woods, woods, aloe vera, camphor, ambers, much polish, beeswax, indigo, cadmium (zinc) powder, opium, booty aloe, marijuana, and many other medicines that will take a long time to count. I have no definite information about jewelry, except for several diamonds, rubies, and pearls, among which I have seen a piece of ruby worth about seven and a half carats and of exceptionally beautiful color"* (Vespucci, 2013: 107-108).

Amerigo Vespucci, thinking of these spices and oils as food and medicine, and valuing foods and medicines as abundance, richness, and wealth, says that *"as a result, the King of Portugal has a great trade and great wealth in his hands: May God increase his abundance"* (Vespucci, 2013: 108).

Amerigo Vespucci (2013: 137), who believes in the high nutritional value of plants and sees them as wealth, states in his eighth letter that fennel is used in 'delicious dishes' to facilitate digestion as an example of daily habits. According to Vespucci, fish and water are essential nutrients for health:

> *"We left the port of Lisbon on May 10, 1501, with three protection ships, turned our course towards the Great Canary Island, and when we saw this island, we proceeded without stopping. From here we docked to the West of the African coast; we fished in this place where we stayed for three days; we caught a kind of fish called 'swallow fish'"* (Vespucci, 2013: 157).

Vespucci's Italian name Besechicce for the Senegalese island of Gorée comes from a monk named Beseghice (Perini, 2013: 121). The area mentioned above by Vespucci is named after this monk; the naming of the clergy after the newly discovered places is a way to thank God employed by the European sailors for their ability to receive new blessings. During this period, fish were traded in the Atlantic Ocean, where Vespucci traveled: in 1497, John Cabot returned to Bristol from a North Atlantic voyage and said that the ocean was boiling with fish; many European fishermen began fishing in the ocean; as a result of this 'Fish Revolution,' Grand Banks Fishing began to sell fish at a cheap price (Holm, 2017).[100] Regarding the types of fish in the Atlantic Ocean mentioned by Amerigo Vespucci, an example is a yellow, gray or white swallow species known as *Haemulon Album Cuvier*: a

[100] Holm, Poul. 2017. The north Atlantic fish revolution: An environmental history of the north Atlantic 1400-1700 (*NorFish*). Web: https://www.tcd.ie/history/research/centres/ceh/norfish/ (accessed: 04/04/2017).

fish species found in the Atlantic Ocean off the coasts of Florida and Bermuda, as well as around the Caribbean and in the Gulf of Mexico and off the coast of Brazil (Zaneveld, 1983: 67).[101] In addition, in the same letter, Vespucci describes that there are various types of trees west of Cape St. Augustine, believing that profits can be made from trees and mines in the fields of gastronomy, furniture, and pharmacy:

> *"On this coast, too, we have seen nothing but a source of profit except for the endless logwood and senna trees, as well as many natural wonders with trees that produce resin"* (Vespucci, 2013: 160).

As a result, Vespucci admires the nutrients that nature has to offer, namely plants, animals, and water, because their varieties are numerous. The American continent is full of such natural riches. According to Amerigo Vespucci, although all the natural beauties in his newly discovered regions are seemingly wonderful, the letters examined above mainly emphasize how important these natural resources are for human survival.

In the next chapter, it will be questioned whether it is a sacred duty for Vespucci to deliver endemic natural resources that are beneficial to humans to other countries through trade.

[101] Zaneveld, Jacques S. 1983. *Caribbean fish life: Index to the local and scientific names of the marine fishes and fishlike invertebrates of the Caribbean area*. Leiden: Brill.

2. 4. Traces of Modern Nature Destruction in Amerigo Vespucci

In this section, Amerigo Vespucci's idea of invading and destroying nature, which underlies his discrimination against the indigenous people of the Americas and his understanding of trade, is analyzed. It can be said that Amerigo Vespucci's letters portrayed the people of the newly discovered lands as cannibals and quite primitive, creating a reason for himself to exploit their natural resources.

2. 4. 1. A Look at Wild Natives

Donna Haraway (1985: 96),[102] *in her "Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s,"* argues that women, people of color, nature, and animals" feel marginalized and oppressed, and that people consider themselves to be different from them, such as 'we/others,' 'mind/body,' 'culture/nature,' 'man/woman,' and 'civilized/primitive.' He says that by creating dilemmas, he decomposes. In this chapter, these dilemmas will be explained, which are also seen in the letters of Amerigo Vespucci.

In his fourth letter to the 'we/others' dilemma, Vespucci (2013: 108) uses the word '*Europia*' for his continent. [103] The same word was used by Ptolemy (Perini, 2013: 108). In the Middle Ages, the term 'Christians' was used instead of this word*;* the fact that Enea Silvio Piccolomini (Pio II) wrote a work called *De*

[102] Haraway, Donna. 1985. A manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, technology, and socialist feminism in the 1980s. *Socialist Review,* 15 : 65– 107.

[103] Perini (2013: XVIII-XIX) considers that Vespucci was influenced by Francesco Berlinghieri; Francesco Berlinghieri *wrote a work called Septe Giornate della Geographia [Seven Days of Geography]*, in which he stipulates knowledge of geography for statesmen: according to Berlinghieri there are three continents, Europe, Africa and Asia, however, in a distant point of Africa only cannibals live; this work of the author was published in Florence in 1482 with maps of three continents.

Europa [About Europe] in the 15th century gives preference to the word Europe over the word Christianity (Perini, 2013: 108). Vespucci's main purpose in using the words both European and Christian in places is to reveal the differences between the lifestyles of the natives and the Europeans, because according to him, the natives are very wild and savage. Amerigo Vespucci does not consider animals as intelligent as humans; he also insultingly likens the people of his newly discovered American continent to animals: in his fifth letter, he uses the following sentence to refer to the people of the land he has discovered*: "let us come to the intelligent animals"* (Vespucci, 2013: 110). It can be said that Vespucci, who describes that he found the natives savage with this sentence, was influenced by the creation of Adam and Eve in the *Old Testament* and the first part of *Genesis*, which explains that humans are the rulers of nature and superior to animals, because all beings in nature are put at the service of human beings:

> *"[27] God created man in his own image, He created him in the image of God [...]. He created them as male and female.[28] Blessing them, he said, 'Be fruitful, multiply,' and added, 'fill the earth and take it under your control; dominate the fish of the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the creatures that dwell on the earth.[29] Behold, I give you every grass that gives seed on earth, and every fruit and tree whose seed is in its fruit. These will be food for you.[30] I give green grass as food to wild animals, to birds in the sky, to reptiles—to all animals that breathe." And so did it happen.[31] God looked at His creations and saw that all was*

very good. It was evening, it became morning, and the sixth day came about" (*Genesis* I – 27-31).

The view that humans are superior to animals is also present in Descartes and Bacon: Descartes, [104] like Bacon,[105] in his quest for a practical philosophy, is aware of the benefits to human beings of all the blessings of nature, such as fire, water and air; the ability of people to use the intellect of people who cultivate nature is the main reason why they are 'masters of nature' (Garrand, 2012: 69).[106]

Amerigo Vespucci is ready to exploit the natives and invade the nature of their lands, just as he made the Europeans their masters by declaring them 'wise animals.' Since these so-called 'intelligent animals' are unbaptized, he despises them; he even declares them worse than animals: "*We have seen people who are worse than animals sitting here"* (Vespucci, 2013: 158). Vespucci makes a distinction between the baptized and the unbaptized; we see this distinction in Amerigo Vespucci's eighth letter: *"We have put a baptismal pool on this land. Thus, too many were baptized to count, and they called us 'caribi' in their own language; this word means 'very wise men'"* (Vespucci, 2013: 148).

In the same letter, Amerigo Vespucci distinguishes the people he sets out with as *'cristiani,'* that is*, 'Christians,'* from other people. As an example, when

[104]Descartes (1596-1650), in his *Discours de la méthode [Speech on Method]*, published in 1637, says that humans are animals with intelligence, and therefore, he argues that nature serves humans (See Descartes, René; Translator: Donald A. Cress. [1637]. 1998. *Discourse on method and meditations on first philosophy*. Indianapolis & Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company).
[105]Francis Bacon (1561-1626) describes a utopian island in his work *Nova Atlantis* (*the book was published in 1627)* to show that technical developments affect nature (Yıldırım, Ömer. 2005b. Francis Bacon's Utopia of the New Atlantis. Web: http://www.felsefe.gen.tr/filozoflar/francis_bacon_ve_yeni_atlantis_nova_atlantis_utopyasi.asp (accessed: 12/12/2017); See Bacon, Francis. [1627]. 2014. *The New Atlantis*. Pictures: Murat Utkay. Istanbul: E-book Project; Cheapest Books; Hyperlink).
[106] Garrand, Greg. 2012. *Ecocriticism*. Oxon & New York: Routledge.

Vespucci (2013: 156) refers to the Antilles as "the *place where we have survived many dangers and hardships together with the same Christians,"* he emphasizes that fellow sailors belong to the same religion and culture.

In addition to perceiving people as animals, accusing them of being cannibals is a derogatory form of classification (Huggan and Tiffin, 2015: 168). In his third letter, Amerigo Vespucci describes how most of the natives were human-eating cannibals, i.e., '*cannibali*' in Italian (Vespucci, 2013: 94). Vespucci (2013: 94) also says that they encountered bones and skulls around.

Migliorini (1994: 384)[107] argues that the Italian language of the period was influenced by different languages, and that some terms related to navigation, distant countries, and geographical phenomena entered Italian in the 1500s. For example, he says that the word '*cannibali'* (cannibals) derives from the name '*Caribi*', which is used in the Caribbean for an ethnic group of people *(*Migliorini, 1994: 384). The natives must have passed on a lot of information about natural phenomena to European sailors, because the hurricane event, which was called '*hurakan*' by the Mexican natives, was referred to as '*uragano*' in Italian (Migliorini, 1994: 384).

In the context of the 'mind/body' dilemma, despite these interactions, the fact that people were named by Columbus[108] according to the region in which they lived, the definition of cannibal was arrived at from there, and Vespucci's statement that the natives were often cannibals, raises the question of whether there was a difference in physical appearance that led to prejudice between the natives and the

[107] Migliorini, Bruno. 1994. *Storia della lingua italiana*. Milan: Bompiani.
[108] Columbus describes the natives of the Antilles as cannibalistic *'Caribi'* (See Hodgins, Vince. 2010. *Tainos, Aztecs, Mayas, and Incas: A timeless tapestry*. Baltimore: PublishAmerica).

Europeans. Vespucci, seeing that the physical characteristics of the natives of the lands he had just encountered were different from those of him and the familiar Europeans, namely the Italians, Spaniards, and Portuguese, in his eighth letter, describes the natives' fear of the clothed Europeans as follows: *"They seemed to be afraid of us; I believe the reason is that they see us dressed and tall"* (Vespucci, 2013: 138). Vespucci and his friends could communicate with the locals only by showing them objects such as bells, mirrors, arches, marbles, etc.; because of this behavior, at dawn the next day, they are surprised to see women and children in front of them (Vespucci, 2013: 139). Vespucci describes the society living in the Canary Islands, which is afraid of clothed people, with the following words:

> *"As for their lives and traditions, we have learned that both men and women walk around naked, without veiling, without shame, just as they come out of their mothers' bellies. They are of medium height; their body contours are quite proportional. Their skin is a color that rings pink like a lion's skin. If they dressed, I think their skin wouldn't tan, so, they would stay white like us. They have no hair on their bodies except for their long, black hair. The bodies of most women are proportional. Their faces are not incredibly beautiful, because they are tall faced, they resemble Tatars. They do not allow hair to grow on their eyelashes or eyelids because they think the hair is ugly"* (Vespucci, 2013: 139).

Perini (2013: 139) argues that Vespucci likened the natives to the Mongols with the phrase 'Tatars.' Vespucci thinks that the skin of the natives darkened

because of the tanning; he describes the racial makeup of the natives as black-haired, tall-faced, and of medium height; however, he finds the reason for the success of the indigenous people in the sport of running in their strong physical structure and says that *"they have a greater advantage in this than us Christians"* (Vespucci, 2013: 139). He argues that indigenous women swim better than men. He writes that the weapons of the natives were primitive tools of war, such as bows and arrows, because they used the teeth and pieces of wood of animals and fish to make weapons (Vespucci, 2013: 140). Since they are warriors, they have an athletic body. Also, when examined in the context of cultural anthropology, they are ruleless in terms of social management systems and fight with the method of revenge:

> *"They have neither kings nor masters, nor obey anyone, for they enjoy their own freedom. When their enemies kill or capture one of them, as they fight in resentment, the eldest relative of that person preaches in the streets to join him in revenge"* (Vespucci, 2013: 140).

According to Vespucci (2013: 149), the bodily characteristics of the natives prove their belligerence. In addition, the cultural markings on the faces of the natives, as well as the paints and feathers they wore, show their desire to fight:

> *"Their bodies were sturdy, and they resembled warrior men, for they were armed with weapons consisting of bows, arrows, and spears; most of them also had small square*

armor; they wore armor in such a way as not to interfere with their bowing" (Vespucci, 2013: 149).

Confident and despised by the natives for their behavior, and even seen calling them '*intelligent animals,'* Vespucci fights the natives to obtain captives from them:

> *"We burst into the square as 57 people divided into four teams. Each captain was with his own team; we fought them hand in hand; after a long struggle, many died, some fled, and after capturing about 250 of them, we pursued them until they encountered a group of people; we ruined these people, and left behind many dead and wounded from them, we came out of the war victorious and with 250 prisoners whom we took to the ship [...]. We didn't suffer more than one casualty than ours, we had 22 wounded. Thank God"* (Vespucci, 2013: 150).

Amerigo Vespucci justifies the war and the massacre of the natives with the above words. Wars, in fact, are the chief causes of the destruction of nature. Grouping people by race is an attack on nature, because humans also constitute a part of nature, but Vespucci sees slavery as normal:

> *"We sailed to Spain with 222 other prisoners. We finally arrived at the port of Cadiz on October 15, 1498, where we were welcomed and sold our slaves. This is what I*

experienced during my first and most important trip"

(Vespucci, 2013: 150).

On his second voyage, Amerigo Vespucci arrives on the shores of Brazil; he is motivated by the idea of taking the natives to Europe as slaves; he mentions, *"we have not caught more than two"* from the people who escaped by seeing the strangers next to them (Vespucci, 2013: 152). All these manhunts are related to slavery, which is the exploitation of human power in Amerigo Vespucci's eighth letter describing their return to Spain with 222 captured slaves (Vespucci, 2013: 150); besides, he even mentions a different number of slaves in his third letter and states that many slaves had died when they arrived in Cadiz (see Vespucci, 2013: 100) by proving that the natives were ruthlessly used as slaves in Europe. From the point of view of nature, from the idea that there is a difference between humans and animals, the belief of treating people as 'animals' emerges (Huggan and Tiflin, 2015: 152). For example, the main reason for the understanding of genocide or slavery is that one group finds the others different (Huggan and Tiflin, 2015: 152). According to Ponting (2000: 171), in line with Amerigo Vespucci's attitude towards the natives, between the 16th and 19th centuries, as Europe discovered new places in South America, colonies cultivated products for Europe that were not available in Europe, and white Europeans became the head of this new economic order based on slave farming.[109]

[109] The word Indian, which is the English equivalent of the word Native American, comes from the Italian word "In Dio" (in God), which Columbus used for Native Americans; Russell Means (1980) makes this statement to indicate that Europeans have their eyes on American soil and are looking for a divine reason to ruin its nature; he also accuses Descartes of abolishing spirituality from the universe and introducing logical explanations in order to promote the harm to nature; therefore, Marxism and capitalism, based on European materialism, are incompatible with the ideas of the Native Americans; Europeans attempted to slaughter the natives of the Americas under the pretext that they were dehumanized creatures (See Means, Russell. 1980. For America to Live Europe Must Die. Web: https://archive.org/details/ForAmericaToLiveEuropeMustDie (accessed: 03/03/2018)).

In his seventh letter, Amerigo Vespucci is now aware that he has arrived on a new continent for the first time. For this reason, this letter is titled *'Mundus Novus' ['New World']:* Amerigo Vespucci declares, *"I have recently written to you very detailed letters about the return from those new lands which we have sought with the financial support of the very venerable King of Portugal, which we have been seeking and finding, which we are legitimate to call 'the New World'*" (Vespucci, 2013: 129), and consequently, he underlines that the sea he crossed, that is, the ocean, was the Atlantic[110] (Vespucci, 2013: 129). At this point, Vespucci finds the land fertile, the air healthy, and the sky clear; he says that the number of people is enormous as stated in the *Apocalypse* (the Revelation chapter of the Bible) (Vespucci, 2013: 131) and mentions two physical characteristics of them that are different to him: a) the natives have *'muscular and proportional bodies'* and *'red skin colors'* (Vespucci, 2013: 131) and b) *"They pierce their cheeks, lips, nose, and ears,"* he says (Vespucci, 2013: 131). It is a cultural habit for people to decorate the holes in their bodies: *"These holes are filled with sky-blue stones, marbles, crystals, and beautiful onyx stones, and white bones, and other artificial materials [...] they adorn"* (Vespucci, 2013: 131). Although men make holes in their faces, women only pierce their ears (Vespucci, 2013: 131). The natives, who make changes and decorations on their physical appearance, do not need laws; when they are hungry, they eat their enemies (Vespucci, 2013: 132). So much so that Vespucci meets a man who '*boasts of eating more than thirteen human bodies'* (Vespucci, 2013: 132). The explorer is astonished to learn this.

[110] The word Atlantic comes from Atlante, the son of Uranus and Gea (Perini, 2013: 120).

According to Amerigo Vespucci in his fifth letter, the locals placed ornaments in the holes in their faces to resemble animals:

> *"Men have their lips and cheeks pierced, and then they insert bones and stones into those holes. Don't think they're small, because most of them have at least three holes, and some even have 7 or 9 holes, into which they place green and white alabaster half an inch long, like a huge plum that looks supernatural. They say they do this to look wilder. As a result, this is an animalistic state"* (Vespucci, 2013: 111).

According to what Vespucci describes in the same letter, these indigenous people feed on human flesh:

> *"The meat they usually eat the most, to put it the way our tongues go, is human flesh. If they hunted both animal and bird meat, they would eat them, but they can catch less of them, because they do not have dogs. The area is covered with forests that are full of wild animals; therefore, they do not dive into the forests alone without forming a community with many people"* (Vespucci, 2013: 111).

In his seventh letter, Vespucci describes in detail the natives eating human flesh: "*Moreover, for twenty-seven days I was in a city where I saw human flesh hanging in the rafters, as it was done to store pigs and pigs with us in the houses"*

(Vespucci, 2013: 132). Vespucci (2013: 132) writes that the natives fought unsystematically to eat each other, not for commercial reasons.

As for the physical differences of the natives, in his third letter, Vespucci (2013: 97) explains that on the island where he is located, women are like Pentesilea[111] and men are like Antei.[112] They are also asked where they come from, because Vespucci and his friends are small with them (Vespucci, 2013: 97). The fact that the physical characteristics of the natives are different from those living in Italy, Spain, and Portugal often leads to prejudice in Amerigo Vespucci.

In his eighth letter, in which he goes on to explain that the natives are generally cannibals, he reiterates that when he set out from Cadiz and arrived at the Isle of Fire, he encountered cannibals; they mark food by castrating boys:

> *"There were left in the canoe four boys, who were not of their generation, whom they had taken from other lands and castrated, all of them lacked the organs of manhood, and their wounds were fresh: this astonished us. They told me that when they boarded the ships, they marked them with castration for food; we learned that these were a very wild, flesh-eating group of people called cannibals"* (Vespucci, 2013: 152).

[111] Pantasilea, Pentesilea, the queen of the Amazons, helped the Trojans after Hector's death (Perini, 2013: 97).
[112] Antei, or Anteo, is the name of the gigantic son of Poseidon and Gea (Perini, 2013: 97).

Regarding cannibalism to which Vespucci referred, it is concluded that it is not known whether Native Americans ate human flesh, but as the people here did not have enough technical tools, the products they were able to obtain may be limited. Cultivating crops in marginal areas is a strategy that can be developed to combat hunger: for this, swamps are cleared, and seeds are sown. The biodiversity, geographical values, demographic characteristics, settlement patterns and suitability of the regions provide information about the agricultural history of those lands (Conte, 2014: 63).[113] Cultural geography, history, and ecological sciences should try to contribute to each other, because science cannot separate human beings and their socio-cultural relations (Cusimano, 1990: 25-26).[114] In the context of cultural geography, the methods of grafting trees that are important from the point of view of ecology vary according to regions; for example, in Sicily and Puglia, different scissors were used for this work in ancient times (Cusimano, 1990: 64). During the reign of Amerigo Vespucci, the natives did not have the sophisticated agricultural tools to grow culturally and geographically diverse crops, but there were many plant species in their area. Vespucci's description of the products that Native Americans eat in the forests they live in and that they live in huts suggests that they are fed with plants and fruits suitable for their region that grow spontaneously depending on climatic conditions. Indeed, if they had eaten human flesh, Vespucci would have to prove it based on more scientific facts. The cannibal figure is present in canto 33 of the Hell Chapter in Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Perini (2013: 171) states that this famous work by Dante Alighieri is in the library

[113] Conte, Chris. 2014. Africa's mountains: Collecting and interpreting the past. *Crossing mountains: The challenges of doing environmental history*, editors: Marcus Hall; Patrick Kupper, 55-64. Munich: RCC.
[114] Cusimano, Girolamo. 1990. *Geografia e cultura materiale*. Palermo: Flaccovio Editore.

of Amerigo Vespucci; It may be concluded that Vespucci, inspired by Dante, may have claimed that cannibals existed:

> *O Pisa, where the ti*[115] *echoes*
> *the disgrace of that beautiful local people,*
> *Since your neighbors are not punishing you;*
>
> *acting heavy, if only Capraia and Gorgona*
> *come and plug Arno's mouth,*
> *and those who live in it drown in the waters!*
>
> *Because, even if the count of Ugolino had been accused of treason to your castles,*
> *You wouldn't torture his children so much.*
>
> (Translated into Turkish by Rekin Teksoy, 2011 , and translated into English from Turkish by Fazıla Derya Agiş; *The Divine Comedy*, Hell, XXXIII, 79–87, page 273)

Count Ugolino della Gherardesca was imprisoned in a tower with his offspring for committing the crime of treason against the city of Pisa, and it is thought that Ugolino, blinded by hunger, ate all his children (Aciman, 2014).[116] Johnson (2001)

[115] Ti note.
[116] Painful, Alexander. 23/06/2014. Recapping Dante: Canto 33, or History's Vaguest Cannibal. *The Paris Review: Arts & Culture*: https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2014/06/23/recapping-dante-canto-33-or-historys-vaguest-cannibal/ (accessed: 03/04/2017).

reports[117] that Count Ugolino and four children died in 1289; Dr. Francesco Mallegni, a paleoanthropologist at the University of Pisa, who examined the skeletons found in a church in Pisa, declared that 98% of the skeletons belonged to Count Ugolino, his two sons Gaddo and Ugguccione, and his two grandsons Nino and Anselmuccio, and that DNA tests indicated that they may have died from a poor diet based on bread and water, and that Count Ugolino even had marks of beatings on his skull. The stories of cannibalism told by Amerigo Vespucci are conjecture, because they cannot be tested. Due to famine in a region rich in nutrients such as plants, vegetables, fruits, and fish, such as the American continent, it is unlikely that humans became cannibalized. According to Amerigo Vespucci's descriptions, there are many fruits and herbs around there.

Vespucci and his friends are also corrupt sometimes; they fight with the natives, or even show invasive behavior, such as robbers or bandits; while capturing children for slavery, they break into the homes of some elders without permission:

> *"About 15 or 20 of them were killed and some were injured, and 5 of us were wounded; they all escaped by the grace of God. We caught two of their children and two grown men and burst into their homes. We found none other in the whole house than two old women and a sick man. We bought many items, but their value was low, and we didn't want to burn down their house, because they seemed full of wisdom to us. Finally, we returned with five prisoners; we*

[117] Johnson, Bruce. 24/09/2001. Bones 'likely to belong to Dante's cannibal count.' *The Telegraph*: http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/italy/1341474/Bones-likely-to-belong-to-Dantes-cannibal-count.html (accessed 04/04/2017).

> *boarded ships and tied the feet of every prisoner except for the girls with iron chains; but in the evening, two girls and a man cunningly fled"* (Vespucci, 2013: 144-145).

Vespucci takes a sarcastic attitude towards the natives: *"They were asking us where we came from, and we were trying to convince them that we came from heaven and came to see the world; they believed it"* (Vespucci 2013:148). On an island, he meets *'very big people'* (Vespucci, 2013: 154). This could be the island of Curaçao; the indigenous people are from a group called Arawak (Perini, 2013: 155). Vespucci (2013: 155) refers to it as the *'island of giants.'* These people are warriors: "*They have big sticks and arrows with huge bows and perforated heads"* (Vespucci, 2013: 155).

In the context of physical skin color differences and races, it is conceivable that Amerigo Vespucci mentioned albinos in his sixth letter. According to Vespucci, natives in South America are not blacks like Africans:

> *"If we refer to the fact that the skin color of the natives there [in South America] is not black, but white, and most of them live in the warm region [...], I reply that the people who dwell in the warm regions need not be naturally black and warm-blooded, like the Ethiopians and the people who live around Ethiopia, because, as I mentioned above, I have crossed all the parallels from Morocco to Ethiopia and crossed the polar line of 32 degrees to the south; I have been to many parts of Africa and Ethiopia: I have been in*

> *the Katim Recess, the Anghille Hollow, Zanaga, the Cape Verde, the Rio Grande, and Sierra Leone, which is 7 degrees adjacent to the polar line, I have also seen and talked to an unlimited number of people; their skin was black, but the blackness of people's skin color was greater in some places than in others"* (Vespucci, 2013: 116).

Vespucci explains that people's skin color can change even if they live in the same area; among black people, people with light skin color can be albinos.[118] Describing the natives as cannibals and primitive, Vespucci dissociates them and finds them as harmful as a disease to modern humans. Lowe (2014: 302-304)[119] says that the groupings of people are as harmful as the viruses that threaten human health in the world. Amerigo Vespucci claims that the natives are as harmful as the diseases, since they are cannibals, and they harm each other. The reason for this aggressive attitude is that, according to Vespucci, they are not Christians and do not even believe in God. People's contempt for each other's race leads to wars. The destruction of the environment by wars is also harmful to the entire ecological structure.

[118] Today, albincholy is a problem of racism in certain geographical areas. Albinography is a disease of the skin that does not produce color. Albinos are being slaughtered in Tanzania; since they were believed to be magical, their hair was tied to fishing nets, and talismans were made from their organs; the cause of diseases of albinos is that, despite the presence of the cell called melanocytes, which give color to the skin, genetic mutations interfere with the production of color: this disease can cause blindness and skin cancer; there is no cure; albinos may be sensitive to the sun (Ballantyne, Coco. 18/02/2009. What causes albinism? Albinos around the world face day-to-day health issues, but in Africa they have a bigger problem: being hacked to death for body parts. *Scientific American*: https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/killing-albinos-tanzania-albinism/ (accessed: 03/03/2017)).

[119] Lowe, Celia. 2014. Infection. *Living Lexicon for the Environmental Humanities. Environmental Humanities* 5, 301-305.

On what Vespucci said in his sixth letter, Zanaga is in the Republic of the Congo; Sierra Leone became a center of the black slave trade after it was found by the Portuguese Pedro de Sintra in 1462 (Perini, 2013: 116). Vespucci explains the racial diversity in the following way: "*I discovered that the main reason why the degree of darkness of people's skin colors varies according to different regions consists of air pressure and the type of soil"* (Vespucci, 2013: 116). According to Vespucci (2013: 116-117), Ethiopia's hot climate, abundance of deserts, and drought have caused people to become black; the sun's rays have burned and darkened human skin; in places where the weather is mild, people's skin is white. Amerigo Vespucci attributes people's racial differences to natural phenomena.

From the point of view of the 'culture/nature' dilemma, Amerigo Vespucci argues that the natives were uneducated, while the Europeans were educated, morally and law-wise: there is no system of punishment in the natives: *"They did not appeal to the concept of justice or punish the offender: neither the father nor the mother punished their children"* (Vespucci, 2013: 140). Amerigo Vespucci's words, accusing the natives of not having a Christian education, because they have no knowledge of morality, are fraught with similar racism. According to him, the natives who seek pleasure and enjoyment are untrustworthy and un-Christians: *"We have not seen that these people have laws. They cannot be said to be Arabs or Jews, and even worse than non-Christians"* (Vespucci, 2013: 141).

In terms of the 'man/woman' dilemma, Vespucci is also surprised by the lust of women*: "We Christians seem too eager to have sex"* (Vespucci, 2013: 141). He argues that the natives are savages. Women are also aggressive and cannibalistic: one day all the women form a circle around a European man, another

woman descends from the mountain, knocks him down with a cane, the women grab him by the feet, and drag him towards the mountainous area; they roast and eat him over a fire lit by them (Vespucci, 2013: 159). Such acts of violence and eating human flesh are incompatible with the Christian religion taught to Vespucci, because in the Bible, Jesus Christ advises people to love their enemies as well*: "But I say to you who are listening to me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ask for goodness for those who curse you, and pray for those who insult you"* (*Luke*, VI: 27-28).

In the context of the 'civil/primitive' dilemma, the reason why Amerigo Vespucci finds the natives wild is that they do not make the daily schedules necessary to act in a planned manner. In his eighth letter, Vespucci states that there are many points to criticize in the diet of the natives and the way they store food:

> *"Their way of life is very barbaric, because they do not eat at certain hours, and many times they eat as much as they want [...]. They store their meals either in the earthenware containers they make or in half pumpkins"* (Vespucci, 2013: 140).

In his eighth letter, Vespucci (2013: 142) also refers to the primitive burial traditions of the natives and the natural and drug-free healing techniques of the sick: *"Some bury the dead with water and food at their bedside, thinking that they should eat,"* and they do not weep at all. When someone is terminally ill, they lay him in a hammock in the forest, dance around him, after leaving water and food on his head, and they walk away; if the patient recovers, after eating her/his meals, s/he

turns to her/his relatives and they arrange a ceremony for this; otherwise, the patient dies silently alone (Vespucci, 2013: 142).

Amerigo Vespucci finds the cooking styles of the locals wild. Some of the animal foods they eat are also bizarre: Vespucci (2013: 144-145) describes in the same letter that he saw a fire burned in the huts of the natives in the forest with about 4,000 people on the beach in a place like Venice:

> *"We went ashore, started to drive down a road leading to the forest, and suddenly we found ourselves in front of their huts, where the natives had lit a huge fire. Two natives were cooking meat for the others over the fire; many animals and many kinds of fish were being fried; they were roasting an animal that had no wings, resembling a serpent, and whose appearance was so ugly that it astonished us for its ferocity"* (Vespucci, 2013: 145).

Later, Vespucci and his friends enter the homes of these people and see some of the strange animals that are consumed as food:

> *"In this way, we had dived into their homes or huts and found a large number of creatures of these snakes. The snakes were bound. A rope was threaded around their faces so that they would not open their mouths, just as it was done to the Great Dane dogs not to bite. They were so savage*

> *that we didn't want to take one of them, considering that they were poisonous"* (Vespucci, 2013: 145).

Vespucci is surprised that the natives eat venomous snakes; people slaughter and eat strange animals, albeit poisonous, in order not to starve: *"In the end, we decided that they were snakes and that they were poisonous. But they were eating and devouring them"* (Vespucci, 2013: 145).

As for the dwellings of the natives, Amerigo Vespucci, in his eighth letter, explains that he could not have made a voyage of discovery without the help of God, because nature presents dangers to humans, as well as that they came to Venezuela with houses with bridges; the natives seem to like the buildings he built, but the natives, ferociously fearing Vespucci and his friends, block the bridges leading to their homes so that they could not reach them:

> *"We went up to a port where we met a village like Venice, built on water: these were about 44 large houses used as huts built on huge poles, with gates or house entrances that served as leveraged bridges. Also, to mention one of them, because of the leveraged bridges that gave way from house to house, it was possible to cross from one house to anywhere. Since the owners were afraid to see us, they removed all the bridges"* (Vespucci, 2013: 143-144).

Here, the place that resembles the Venice that Vespucci talks about is Venezuela. Perini (2013: 144) suggests that Vespucci never went to Venice, that

someone else depicted Venice to him, and that he may have been inspired by Vittore Carpaccio's 1494 painting "The miracle of the cross at the Rialto."

Figure 10. Carpaccio, Vittore. 1494. The miracle of the cross at the Rialto[120]

As a result, according to Amerigo Vespucci's letters, the natives make no distinction between people; some people eat their enemies. Some have a red skin color, others are black, while others are white. Amerigo Vespucci was surprised by the natives' meat-eating and women's strong sex drive. For Vespucci and other Europeans, certain natives were physically strong and could be used as slaves. Vespucci explains that slaves were taken to Europe by ship to work in different jobs

[120] Carpaccio, Vittore. 1494. *Miracolo della croce a Rialto* [Rialto'da haç mucizesi]. *Wikimedia Commons*: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Vittore_carpaccio,_miracolo_della_Croce_a_Rialto_01.jpg (accessed: 02/02/2017).

in Europe.[121] Among the natives, there is no institution of slavery, because everyone is equal: they have no king, no governor, no legal authority; everything they use is common (see Vespucci, 2013: 110 - 111). He is surprised that the natives do not even have heirs: "*They have no heirs, because they have no property of their own*" (Vespucci, 2013: 111). Vespucci (2013: 110 - 112) says that the natives are cannibals who are not modern, who walk naked and have a different appearance from Europeans, because they pierce some parts of their faces and place stones there, who are faithless, polygamous, who do not know how to count the months and days, who are so ignorant that they can only show what time it is with stones, and who fight with primitive weapons, and by taking advantage of their workmanship, he creates a defence mechanism for himself in order to destroy the nature of the lands they live in.

Amerigo Vespucci's contempt for the natives as uneducated primitive people, based on their appearance and their lack of advances such as weaponry and shipbuilding, by creating an 'us/others' dichotomy, is meant to legitimize the use of the natives' lands as a commercial route. In terms of the 'culture/nature' dichotomy, he sees the natives as uncultured and surrendered to nature, far from Renaissance culture, never having read the works of classical writers; in terms of the 'mind/body' dichotomy, he sees educated Europeans as mentally superior to the natives because of their education, while he sees the physical strength of the natives as capable of enslaving them. In terms of the 'male/female' dichotomy, he found

[121] Like slavery, the issue of labor can be examined from a humanities perspective in the context of environmental criticism in a capital-oriented world (Hamilton, Jennifer. 2015. Labour. *Living Lexicon for the Environmental Humanities. Environmental Humanities* 6: 183-186). Slavery is the forced labor of someone and the creation of a lower social class of slaves; after 1492, Europe established colonies strategically to provide raw materials and develop their markets: England, Spain, France, and the Netherlands preceded Belgium in colonization (Huggan and Tiflin, 2015: 159). Natives, who were different from Europeans because of their appearance, were marginalized and enslaved to serve them.

male natives to be warlike and female natives to be excessively sensual; in the context of the 'civilized/primitive' dichotomy, he argued that Europeans were civilized, and natives were primitive, ideas that legitimized that civilized people could resort to trade to become more civilized. Vespucci decides to enslave these natives, whom he finds different, instead of educating them to reach the same cultural level as Europeans.

2. 4. 2. Natural Resources

It is clear from some of Amerigo Vespucci's letters that he sees natural resources as a gift from God to humans, based on the Catholic culture and education he received. Trade in his eyes aims to ensure that all the products offered by nature to human beings are taken from communities that cannot benefit from them and reach people in developed regions. What people do on nature has implications for the future of the world, and people's cultural values shape their perspectives on the substances that nature offers (Neimanis, Åsberg, Hedrén, 2015: 68).[122] Merchant (1989: 3)[123] argues that religion, i.e., the Christian faith, is the source of the understanding that humans are in control of nature, and argues that in the 16th century, the perception that "humans are the masters of nature" was reflected in politics and social life due to technological and industrial developments. According to Merchant (1989: 3), the world, as a 'living organism', is as much a 'nurturing mother' as it is a 'living organism' that enables people to survive by valuing these products as food. In this chapter, it will be observed that Amerigo Vespucci

[122] Neimanis, Astrida; Cecilia Åsberg; Johan Hedrén. 2015. Four problems, four directions for environmental humanities: Toward critical posthumanities for the Anthropocene. *Ethics & the Environment* 20 (1): 67-97.
[123] Merchant, Carolyn. 1989. *The death of nature: Women, ecology, and the scientific revolution*. New York: Harper & Row.

believed that humans are the owners and masters of nature, and that he also argued that nature feeds people like a mother, but he does not take measures to protect nature, which is a 'living organism'; he only tries to benefit from nature and obtain commercial gain.

Thus, in this chapter, it will be described what Amerigo Vespucci learned from the cultural values that were the sources of his anthropocentric attitudes, namely the Bible and the Christian saints, which contradicted his admiration for the abundance of natural resources of the land that he encountered for the first time.

2. 4. 2. 1. The Bible and the Natural Resources

The biblical (*Old Testament*) origins of nature as a source of both spiritual peace and material wealth are revealed in Amerigo Vespucci's fifth letter with the sentence "*We have come to explain the land, its inhabitants, animals, plants, and other things that we find useful in those places for human life"* (Vespucci, 2013: 110).

Moreover, according to Vespucci (2013: 110), plants and animals are essential to human survival, while birds are adorning the earth with their colors and songs. According to Lynn White (1967),[124] the cause of the 'mechanical' world-conception in the service of human beings, i.e.,[125] the 'crisis of nature', as well as

[124] White, Lynn. 1967. The historical roots of our ecologic crisis. *Science, New Series (Published by American Association for the Advancement of Science)* 155 (3767) (March 10, 1967): 1203-1207.
[125] For Descartes, "*since the material universe is a machine, there can be no purpose, life, and spirituality in matter"* (Yaylı and Yaslıkaya, 2015: 455; Yaylı, Hasan; Refik Yaslıkaya. 2015. İnsan doğa ilişkisi tasarımında radikal dönüşüm: Derin ekoloji. *International Journal of Science Culture*

the destruction of nature today, is found in the Bible. Thus, because of the culture he receives Vespucci has a 'mechanical' (at the service of the people) conception of the world: he presents the places he discovers to Europeans as fertile and inhabitable lands.

As Lévi-Strauss (2014: 93)[126] notes, during the Renaissance, the discovery of the American continent confirms the knowledge offered by the Bible and classical writers. Thus, in the writings of those who traveled to the Americas during the Renaissance, there are phrases "distant lands—Aden, Atlantis, the Garden of the Hesperides, the Fortunate Islands —and the strange peoples depicted by Pliny" (Lévi-Strauss, 2014: 93). Similarly, Vespucci, a Renaissance merchant, says that he thought he was in the 'Garden of Eden,' or the earthly paradise where Adam and Eve lived before they were cast out, as described in the Bible: "God put Adam there[127] to look after the garden of Eden, to cultivate it," and "he commanded him, 'You may eat the fruit of any tree you want in the garden.'" (*Genesis*, II – 15-16). In these sentences, biblical anthropocentrism becomes clear: the heaven on earth is filled with fruits and plants that Adam could have eaten. All of them are beneficial for the healthy life of people. Natural beauties, birds, and their songs supply psychological relaxation to humans. Depending on the Christian culture he took, based on Vespucci's view that the land is both a 'living organism' and a 'machine' because of the constant product it produces, it is stated that Vespucci had proposed a 'mechanical world view' before Bacon and Descartes. Merchant (1989: 2) explains that this mechanistic order of nature means that nature can be used by

and Sport (IntJSCS) 3: 452-465 [Radical transformation in human-nature relationship design: Deep ecology. *International Journal of Science Culture and Sport (IntJSCS)* 3: 452-465]).

[126] Lévi-Strauss, Claude. 2014. *Hepimiz yamyamız* [*We are all cannibals*]. Translator: Haldun Bayrı. Foreword: Maurice Olender. Istanbul: Metis Publications.

[127] The Garden of Eden.

humans for the purpose of gaining capital. Since the 17th century thinkers Bacon and Descartes argued that nature is a 'machine' that serves man, the fact that people obtain products by cultivating the land makes them the bosses of nature (Merchant, 1989: XXI). Vespucci, on the other hand, thinks that he has a right to nature as a human being, and travels to obtain mechanical benefits from nature. These travels were primarily for commercial purposes (Fernández-Armesto, 2007: 61).[128]

The bringing of the natural resources of the Americas to the European continent leads to a trade based on sacred values. Ponting (2000: 127) also says that the *Genesis* chapter of the Bible tells us that God allows people to use nature and that nature is at the service of humans. Amerigo Vespucci's transformation of his fascination with nature into a trade business was based on his cultural education: in the Bible, Adam reigns over all creatures. As an example, it is seen that he was tasked with protecting and caring for the Garden of Eden, and that he also had dominion over all nonhuman creatures, because Adam was tasked with naming all animals: "God created all the animals on earth and the birds in heaven from the earth. He brought them all to Adam to see what he would call them. Whatever Adam gave each of them a name, that creature was called by that name" (*Genesis* II - 19). So, according to the Bible, humans are superior to all other creatures and have a say over them.

[128] According to Migliorini (1994: 384), due to trade relations, plant and animal names were also introduced into Italian from different indigenous languages; for example, 'pineapples' and 'cacao beans' as plants and 'iguanas' and 'caimans' (crocodiles) as animals. Christopher Columbus' erroneous definition of India led to Native Americans being called 'indiano' in Italian (Migliorini, 1994: 384). Vespucci's discoveries also show that the American continent is rich in fruits, plants, and animals.

Amerigo Vespucci sees the American continent he arrived at as a paradise full of natural riches; it is also possible that he imagined in his mind in the Bible Eden, where Adam and Eve were expelled, because he spoke of places full of vegetative riches, which are the opposite of the earth, that is, where he saw no pets on a piece of land other than the continent on which he lived; he also adds to his fifth letter that people were naked as they were when Adam and Eve were not expelled from heaven: "*We have seen that the whole land is ruled by completely naked people, so that men, like women, have no shame even though they walk around without any clothes*" (Vespucci, 2013: 110). Here, the *Old Testament* depiction of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden has an influence, but as Vespucci speaks of shame, he is aware that he is in the world, that is, he is far from the Garden of Eden, and in short, what he describes is not imaginary.

Vespucci may have subconsciously harbored that among the reasons God expelled Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden was that they disobeyed the rules and ate the fruit of the forbidden tree; he was culturally aware that in the Bible God emphasized that people should dress in the world; he also derived this from the Bible: "God made garments of leather for Adam and his wife, and clothed them" (*Genesis*, III - 21).[129]

From the point of view of the environment, these depictions show that since the natives had no commercial law, no class dress code, no managers, or no legislators, they lived equally in natural environments and away from the

[129] During this period, clothes, olive oil, and raw wool came to Seville from Guadalquivir; in Andalusia, winemaking, mint, wheat production, cattle breeding, pig breeding, fishing, blacksmithing, soap making, and shipyard work are sources of income; Seville soaps are admired by the British and Germans; sugar came to Seville from the Canary Islands and the British bought it (Fernández – Armesto, 2007: 47).

understanding of trade. In addition, in his fifth letter, Vespucci criticizes the fact that Native Americans spend precious stones in vain and try to make earrings to resemble animals more (Vespucci, 2013: 111). However, precious stones are very important for fashion-based trade: in Florence in the 15th century, a ball named after Vespucci was held in the *Palazzo della Signoria* in April; European women of this period wore fluffy gold or silver gilded skirts together with gold buckles or brooches (Gori, 1898: 23).[130] This is a reminder that during the Vespucci era, clothing and ornaments were appreciated in Europe. Locals try to resemble animals, whereas Florentines and other Europeans value jewelry. Gold and silver were an especially important source of livelihood for Seville (Fernández–Armesto, 2007: 47). It is written in the Bible that it is necessary for humans to work to buy all these beautiful clothes and ornaments and for the necessities of eating and drinking: as humans cannot obtain food on earth without working because of the sin of Adam and Eve, they must work in the world: "You will earn your bread by sweating until you return to the soil. Because you are the soil, you were created from the soil. And again, you will return to the soil" (*Genesis*, III - 19).

2. 4. 2. 2. Christian Saints and Natural Resources

Pericentrism is a concept that emerged from Eastern religions, such as Taoism, Buddhism, Shamanism[131]; nor can the influence of St. Francis of Assisi,

[130] Gori, Pietro. 1898. "Abbigliamenti e costumi del secolo XV." *I centenari del 1898: Periodico diretto da Pietro Gori. Toscanelli – Vespucci – Savonarola: Firenze nel secolo XV feste, giouchi, spettacoli.* Firenze [Florence]: Tipografia Galletti e Cocci; pages 23-24.

[131] Greta Gaard (2014: 291-300)[131] also argues that yoga, a type of worship in Buddhism that promotes the integration of nature and the human spirit, may have played an important role in the birth of environmentalist criticism in literature (Gaard, Greta. 2014. Mindful new materialisms: Buddhist roots for material ecocriticism's flourishing. *Material ecocriticism*, editors: Serenella Iovino; Serpil Oppermann, 291-300. Bloomington: Indiana University Press).

who lived between 1182 and 1286,[132] be underestimated on this concept (Garrand, 2012: 25).

Figure 11. di Bondone, Giotto (1267-1337). Epic of St. Francesco: Sermon to the birds, Basilica of Assisi, Italy[133]

St. Francis has been declared by Pope Francis[134] as the protector of those interested in ecology (Emmett and Nye, 2017: 10). His work[135] is a prayer of

[132] If the relationship between St. Francis and Amerigo Vespucci is mentioned, St. Francis of Assisi (also known as St. Francis or Francis) is the founder of the Franciscan sect, born in 1182 in the town of Assisi, Italy; he was the son of Pietro Bernardone and Madame Pica, who traded fabrics with France; he explains that by selling his father's goods, he has placed himself in the hands of God; a group of people followed in his footsteps, and in 1210, the lifestyle of St. Francis and his followers received verbal approval from Pope Innocent III; on Christmas Eve 1223, he founded the first nursery in the town of Greccio, depicting the stable where Christ was born; this tradition also survives to the present day; in 1224, while praying on Mount Verno, St. Francis had the same scars on his hands, feet, and chest as the wounds of Jesus Christ; it is called the miracle of Stigmata; following this, he wrote his "Hymn of the Creatures," which depicts the bodies 'sun' and 'moon' as siblings to express his love for all creatures and the goodness of God; St. Francis died in 1226; he was canonized in 1228 (Sent Antuan Bazilikası, 2017; Sent Antuan Bazilikası. 2017. Aziz Francesco: Serafik Pederimiz ve Kurucumuz. Web: http://www.sentantuan.com/fransiskenler/aziz-Francesco/ (accessed: 12/12/2017) [Saint Antuan Basilica, 2017; Saint Antuan Basilica. 2017. St. Francesco: Our Father and Founder. Web: http://www.sentantuan.com/fransiskenler/aziz-Francesco/ (accessed: 12/12/2017]).

[133] di Bondone, Giotto (1267-1337). Aziz Francesco Destanı: Kuşlara Vaaz, Assisi Bazilikası, İtalya. [The Epic of St. Francesco: Sermon to the Birds, Basilica of Assisi, Italy]. *Wikimedia Commons*: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Giotto_-_Legend_of_St_Francis_-_-15-_-_Sermon_to_the_Birds.jpg (accessed: 04/07/2018).

[134] In 2015, Pope Francis issued a book *"Laudato Sí,"* that is *"Praise be to God"*; he calls for a global dialogue for environmental rights, following the example of St. Francis of Assisi: according to this declaration, St. Francis of Assisi argues that God speaks to humans through nature (See Pope Francis. 24/05/2015. *Laudato sí*. Web: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html (accessed: 08/08/2017)).

[135] Sent Antuan Kilisesi. 2017. Aziz Antuan yansımaları: "Yaratıkların İlahisi." Web: http://www.azizantuan.org/tur/pagina.asp?id=230 [Saint Antuan Church. 2017. St. Anthony

gratitude to God for the nature and creatures He has created; it depicts the land as a mother or sister feeding people. St. Francesco of Assisi reminds us in the Bible that nature, the products of which people will strive for their survival, is full of blessings that God offers to people to thank Him, and he sees the moon and sun as siblings, because God created them. St. Francesco also influences Vespucci. Here, a new meaning is given to the biblical conception of the superior human who dominates all of nature: Lynn White (1967: 1206) argues that St. Francis taught men to be humble rather than boastful of being human in the face of God's creativity, and, therefore, to regard all creatures as brothers and sisters.

White (1996: 12) argues that the use of technological tools on nature has led to many uncontrollable environmental damages because of the Christian faith dominating man. Özdağ (2005b: 169)[136] also says that the source of the damage to nature is an '*anthropocentric and utilitarian view'* of nature. In addition, White (1996: 14) emphasizes that the destruction of nature by technological means has religious solutions as well as religious causes. White (1996: 13) sees the teachings of St. Francesco as religious solutions. According to White (1967: 1206), St. Francis says that humans should be humble in the face of God's creativity and that humans and other creatures should be friends, because humans have no right to rule over other creatures. Despite this, the products offered by the wild nature are tried to be transformed into economic gains (Oelschlaeger, 1991: 69).[137]

reflections: "Hymn of Creatures." Web: http://www.azizantuan.org/tur/pagina.asp?id=230] (accessed: 12/12/2017).

[136] Özdag, Ufuk. 2005b. On the intrinsic value of the land: Terry Tempest Williams. Refuge: An unnatural history of family and place. *Hacettepe University Journal of Faculty of Letters* 22 (1): 169-182.

[137] Oelschlaeger, Max. 1991. The alchemy of modernism: The transmutation of wilderness into nature. *The idea of wilderness: From prehistory to the age of ecology*, 68-96. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press.

Amerigo Vespucci, who is familiar with the teachings of the anthropocentric St. Tomaso as well as the environmentalist St. Francesco, explains in his fifth letter that precious stones such as emeralds and diamonds, which shine like crystals from the natural products of the American continent, as well as fruits and vegetables, can bring economic welfare:

> *"With crystals, we saw an unlimited number of taste sources and felt the smells of spices around, but they were not the smells we knew. The people of this land talk about gold and other mines, fruits and vegetables, and many miracles, but I am a supporter of St. Tomaso. Time will show everything"* (Vespucci, 2013: 113).

In his *Summa Theologica,* St. Tomaso[138] argues that God is aware of all that He has created, and that light is a common value for the creatures of the earth and the heavens; the existence of every living creature is understood by light. Therefore, all the beauties of nature catch our eye in the daytime, in the light. 'To be a supporter of St. Tomaso' means 'not to believe without seeing' (Perini, 2013: 113). Likewise, Christopher Columbus, influenced by Vespucci, also had a belief in St. Tomaso (see Ferraro, 1875: 66-67).[139] Oelschlaeger (1991: 76) states that St. Tomaso of Aquinas made a scientific difference by making a distinction between reason and faith. Ponting (2000: 128) emphasizes that St. Tomaso argued that all living things are in a hierarchical order until they reach God, and that since they have

[138] St. Thomas Aquinas. 1947. *The summa theologica.* Translators: Fathers of the English Dominican Province. Benziger Bros.
[139] Ferraro, Giuseppe. 1875. *Relazione delle scoperte fatte da C. Colombo da A. Vespucci e da altri dal 1492 al 1506 tratta da manoscritti della Biblioteca di Ferrara e pubblicata per la prima volta ed annotata dal Prof. Giuseppe Ferraro.* Bologna: Gaetano Romagnoli.

intelligence, humans are superior to animals that they do not consider having intelligence. Özdağ (2005a: 106) states that this view of St. Tomaso led people to think that animals were in their service. For Descartes, animals are machines in the service of humans, incapable of reasoning (Ponting, 2000: 130; Özdag, 2005a: 104). At the same time, according to Descartes, animals are emotionless: they do not feel pain and sadness; therefore, they can supply services to humans like machines (Özdağ, 2005a. 104). In his letters to John Beale, Bacon argued that nature should be studied and recognized by human beings, and in this way, they could manage nature and use it according to their needs (Ponting, 2000: 131). For Bacon, the involvement of animals and birds in experiments as guinea pigs benefits humans (Özdağ, 2005a: 104). In this case, Amerigo Vespucci, before Descartes and Bacon, took an anthropocentric approach and explained that all living things and nature were at the service of people in the European continent where they were born and raised. As a good example of this, Amerigo Vespucci, in his sixth letter to criticize the lack of commercial curiosity and mentality in the natives, stated that the natives lived a primitive life, had no possessions, had no kings and governors, that everything was common, that they received no price or remuneration for their work, and that they distributed to them in abundance the gold which was so valuable in Europe even in exchange for the pieces of wood or mirrors they gave them; he said in astonishment that they did not want gold from the Europeans; Amerigo Vespucci is a witness that the natives have no valuable and material expectations, because the natives give him pearls and gold for free (Vespucci, 2013: 118). Amerigo Vespucci is incredibly surprised: a native gives him 157 pearls in exchange for just one whistle, puts this whistle in his mouth, and continues his way without giving it any commercial or material value (Vespucci, 2013: 118). While the natives are not interested in trade, Amerigo Vespucci values gold and pearls, since they were

appreciated in Europe, because they are the blessings that nature offers to humans to be rich in the world, whereas the natives do not seek to acquire property; they use only the remnants of animals for their outward appearance; for a European, this is a travesty of trade: "*A lot of things happened that you would be surprised to tell me. Their only wealth consisted of feathers, fish bones, and the like: not to be rich, but to be adorned while playing games or fighting"* (Vespucci, 2013: 118).

Amerigo Vespucci, in his seventh letter, states that he was looking for precious stones and minerals in the places[140] he went; Pliny, one of the classic writers taken as an example by Amerigo Vespucci, also mentioned the benefits of minerals to people in his *Natural History*:

> *"Even if we didn't bring it with us at the end of our first trip, this land is overflowing with gold. The natives convinced us that there was a large amount of gold in the middle of their land; they were not careful to keep this gold in their hands, nor did they place a commercial value on it. Therefore, I think that our Pliny never visited such a place"* (Vespucci, 2013: 133).

[140] Emma Yazzie's story explains how the European greed for mining led to the extinction of Native American animals: Grinde and Johansen (1995) describe how Native American lands were damaged by European invasions and industrial activities there; Emma Yazzie, a Navajo native living in a Navajo conservation area, persists in the area where she was born and raised, including coal mines; from the grazing area belonging to Yazzie, the path of the mining operation here passes and the sheep die as a result of poisoning; because of a coal mining operation, not only does the land of the Navajo Indians become uninhabitable, but the nature of the region known as the 'Mountain of the Navajo spirit' called 'Black Mesa' is destroyed to such an extent that no living thing can survive (Grinde, Donald A.; Bruce S. Johansen. 1995. *Ecocide of Native America: Environmental destruction of Indian lands and peoples.* Sante Fe, New Mexico: Clear Light Publishers).

Fascinated by the beauty that nature has to offer, Vespucci begins to look for ways to profit from it by exploiting it, because, as described in the Bible, people must receive help from nature by making efforts to survive. In fact, according to Garrand (2012: 66), in environmental criticism, wildness refers to the pureness of nature not demolished by "civilization" and appears as a sacred morality base in order to protect the habitats and species of the New World, thus the Americas; its sacred value cannot be ignored; the foregrounding of wildness distinguishes the humanities from the traditional humanities based on environmental criticism (Garrand, 2012: 66).

In his eighth letter, Vespucci is honored to have made four voyages and to have seen different minerals, plants, and animals: *"things which I have seen on various shores of the earth by virtue of my four voyages to discover new lands,"* in addition to the statement that *"two of them are from the great bay of the Ocean to the West by the order of Don Ferrando, King of Castile*[141]*; the other two are to the South on the orders of the powerful Portuguese King Don Manovello,"* he tells us about the material backers and discovery aspects of his four voyages (Vespucci, 2013: 136-137). He also says that his uncle, Giorgio Antonio Vespucci, who trained him, changed him; education is the basis of his commercial and divine aspect: "*otherwise, I would be a completely different person from that I am today"* (Vespucci, 2013: 137). Vespucci takes this sentence from the fourth sentence of the first verse of Petrarca's *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* (Perini, 2013: 137). Vespucci (2013: 137) says that the purpose of the King of Spain's financial support for travel was commercial, and that travel lasted about four years. Perini (2013: 137) writes

[141] Don Ferrando: King of Spain [King of Aragon II. or King of Castile V.] Ferdinand; Don Manovello: Emanuele, King [Manuel I] of Portugal (See Perini, 2013: 136).

that these four years are between 1491 and 1496. Amerigo Vespucci (2013: 138) argues that his sacred duty is '*adiutare a discoprire*,' that is*, 'to aid discovery.'*

Amerigo Vespucci also tries to give gifts to the locals to exchange goods for commercial purposes: after the Island of Fire, where he is said to have encountered 'about 400 men and many women' in a place they visited, Vespucci tries to gift the locals a canoe, but the locals are far from the understanding of trade:

> *"This canoe was as long as twenty-six feet and as wide as two arms; it was made by carving a single tree, as it had an exceptionally fine workmanship. After pulling him into a creek and putting him in a safe place, they all escaped [...]. This behavior seemed completely barbaric to us"* (Vespucci, 2013: 152).

Vespucci tries to trade with the natives living in another bay by exchanging again. The natives make them use the products of their land free of charge, and accept as mere ornaments worthless items which they do not attach commercial importance to:

> *"We negotiated for 150 pearls, which they gave us in exchange for a bell and a little gold. We also found that they drank white and red wines prepared with the seeds from which they made fruits and beer in these lands"* (Vespucci, 2013: 153).

However, some natives steal the pearls of other human tribes by fighting; Amerigo Vespucci tries to learn how they fish from them:

> *"Further west than them were other groups of people who had enemies, who had many pearls; they had obtained the pearls they had by fighting their enemies. They also showed us how they fished"* (Vespucci, 2013: 153).

Vespucci regards wars as the self-destruction of the human species. According to him, people fight to steal from each other the earth or precious stones that nature offers.

Also in his seventh letter, Amerigo Vespucci wrote in the spring of 1503, after mentioning the foods near Antarctica in March or April, namely fruits and wild animals, he depicts the following:

> *"Although we did not bring it on our first cruise, there is plenty of gold in this land [...]. The natives informed us that there was an abundance of gold under the ground, but they did not value gold at all, nor did they see it as a valuable object. There are plenty of pearls here, as I told you about earlier"* (Vespucci, 2013: 133).

Amerigo Vespucci writes in his eighth letter that the natives did not value the precious stones and gold on their land:

> *"They don't resort to trade. They neither buy nor sell goods. As a result, they live and are happy with what nature offers them. They do not hold the gold, jewelry, pearls, and other riches that we use in Europe and elsewhere; even if they are on their land, they do not sweat to obtain them, nor do they value them"* (Vespucci, 2013: 142).

Vespucci (2013: 143) tries to communicate with the natives only by hand signals, since he cannot speak the language of the natives: therefore, he cannot ask them about the precious stones of the region and is content only with what he sees: *"We have seen nothing of much value but gold; I believe that the reason for this is that we do not know the language"*; this reveals that what he tells about the natives is superficial information, reiterating that he is in pursuit of valuable and tradable objects (Vespucci, 2013: 143). Amerigo Vespucci sees nature as a treasure. For this reason, in his ninth letter, he says that the trade between the Portuguese and Italians like him is different, and explains the reason as follows:

> *"I think there is a great difference between the trade which the King of Portugal has done and what has been done with us, for theirs is to buy one or two goods which have a definite price, or even to a single place, and which respond to the factors which the king cares about, for money, or for cloths of equal value; our trade is the opposite, for the things that must be sent to the islands [...] are too numerous and unlimited to count"* (Vespucci, 2013: 167).

Vespucci argues that it is quite different to set up trade relations with natives who have no knowledge of trade and Africans who have little knowledge of trade. Food can be brought from the Portuguese islands, but care must be taken to ensure that it does not spoil on the way; in addition, the kingdom can profit by imposing taxes on goods brought from different islands (Vespucci, 2013: 167-168). As for spices, at that time, Portugal was the leader of the black pepper and spice trade in Europe (Parker, 2010: 236).[142] In the same letter, Vespucci details the commercial accounting of natural commercial products, including fabrics woven with natural products:

> *"The value of all goods sent to each ship shall have to be recorded in a signed manner by the merchant and treasurer, or by another producer's agent whom You have appointed in Seville or Cadiz. The values and sales of the goods carried by each ship [...] may be recorded in a ledger; by imposing the price and rent of the goods received on the merchant, everyone can receive their own profits, and in this way, an order and an agreement can be achieved; there is neither fraud nor cheating in this business"* (Vespucci, 2013: 168).

In closing, Vespucci emphasizes his respect for his elders in terms of the employer-boss and merchant relationship by saying*, "I humbly kiss the hands of*

[142] Parker, Philip. 2010. *World history*. London: Dorling Kindersley Limited. A Penguin Company. [Goa (1510), Malacca (1511), Ormuz (1515), and Macau (1517), which Portugal discovered between 1510 and 1517 before the English began to establish colonies in the Americas, secured Portugal's trade routes to the East (Parker, 2010: 236-237)].

Your Majesty the Honorable One," and signs his letter with the title *"captain": "Amerigo Vespucci, captain"* (Vespucci, 2013: 168*).*[143] As can be seen from the letter, the Portuguese-influenced European trade of Vespucci's time evokes a sense of difference in him. Pretending to be a conciliator between diverse cultures, he proposes two ways in the same letter about the import of fabrics: 1) to trade goods that the cardinal likes, and 2) to ask merchants to do this work (Vespucci, 2013: 168). Also, in the same letter, Vespucci asks Cardinal Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros, a treasurer, and the maker of the goods to keep a ledger to record the goods to be sold (Vespucci, 2013: 168).

Amerigo Vespucci (2013: 104), in his fourth letter, says that Zafala is as big as Cairo; he even states that there is gold and that the people pay their kings; aloe vera is grown in Mezibino; lacquer types and silk fabrics are other regional natural resources (Vespucci, 2013: 104). He describes Mombasa, Mogadishu, Jeddah, Melindi, Kenya, and Mecca as places rich in gold, fabrics, and spices and full of spice makers (Vespucci, 2013: 104-105). The island of Sumatra is as large and full of natural riches as Zilon; spices, medicinal plants, and precious stones can be brought from Iran and Arabia (Vespucci, 2013: 107).

Regarding Vespucci's discourse on commerce and religion, it can be said that he used a form of oratory in his correspondence that showed his faith. For example, he occasionally thanks God for the abundance of commercial blessings

[143] On 22 March 1508, Amerigo Vespucci was made *"piloto mayor"* on behalf of the institution authorized to organize the expedition in Seville (Perini, 2013: XLII). His new assignment gives him three powers: 1) the training and examination assessments of captains to the islands and other islands in the Indian Ocean; 2) a drawing of the map of the territories and islands in the Indian islands hitherto discovered on behalf of Spain; 3) a drawing of a general map of the land that the captains told Amerigo Vespucci that they had discovered (Perini, 2013: XLII).

He gives: he says, *"Dio laudato"* ("Praise be to God*"*) (Amerigo Vespucci's eighth letter; Vespucci, 2013: 164) and wishes a blessing and abundance on the King of Portugal: *"May God bless him"* (fourth letter of Amerigo Vespucci; Vespucci, 2013: 108).

In addition, in a letter he wrote about his commercial relations, Amerigo Vespucci also mentions the *'charlini,'* the money of the period that he gave to the coachman as a transportation expense: in Florence, this currency was introduced in 1490 (Perini, 2013: 87).

One might think that Vespucci may have shied away from the natives a bit: he does not speak to them indirectly, empathize with them, and express their thoughts and oral traditions. In terms of the culture he received, Vespucci does not think about whether nature has been destroyed or not, and he only wants to benefit from the blessings that nature offers, and even to explain to those he serves how to benefit from nature. Therefore, according to what he says in his third letter, when Amerigo Vespucci came across groups of people who spoke different languages, he could not speak to them, he did not know their language, but he took pearls and precious stones from the land where they lived and took them to Europe:

> *"We have explored a vast land and saw countless people who would speak various languages. All these people were naked. On land we have seen many wild animals, various birds, and trees [...]. With pearls we bought gold [...]: we bought two stones: one was ruby-colored, the other was an amethyst, extremely hard; it was half an inch long and three*

> *fingers thick [...]. We bought a large piece of crystal, which some jewelers call beryl [...]. We bought fourteen pinkish pearls, which the Queen [Isabella of Castile] liked very much; we also bought many precious stones that looked beautiful to us; but we have not calculated the quantities of all these goods [...]"* (Vespucci, 2013: 99-100).

As he explained in his eighth letter, when he set foot in Venezuela, Vespucci's real intention was, as can be seen below, to turn natural resources into commercial gains; some natives give pearls to them in exchange for worthless goods; among these worthless goods are bells and mirrors; pearls are a product offered to man by the sea, which is a part of nature:

The queen mentioned was Isabella of Castile, while *'maravedi*' is a currency belonging to Castile (Perini, 2013: 156). The queen is fond of ornaments and pearls. Leaving there, Vespucci reaches Hispaniola (see Davies, 1952: 336), which he calls 'Antilla': he describes the region as the island "discovered by Christopher Columbus," even thanking God that he will find new goods in his commercial expeditions, and that they have not survived accidents:

> *"We left the said island on July 22 and continued our cruise for a month and a half, finally, the day we entered the port of Cadiz was September 8. Thank God"* (Vespucci, 2013: 156).

Vespucci explains that they took the island for King Manuel I of Portugal and that they could do what they wanted here: *"[...] we bought this land, which we considered to be very pleasant, green and beautiful for the king"* (Vespucci, 2013: 158).

Meanwhile, it is noticed that the newly discovered places are named after Christian saints: as Vespucci and his friends continue their way, they come to a place they call *'St. Augustine's Hollow'*[144] (Vespucci, 2013: 159). The fact that these people in the Catholic faith give the names of Christian saints to the places they have just discovered means that they expect a holy blessing and abundance from this land in the world. According to the philosophical view of St. Augustine, "the universe is beautiful because it was created by the grace and goodness of God Himself" (Yıldırım, 2005c).[145]

In addition, one of the Christian saints who, in difficult circumstances, caused Amerigo Vespucci to remember the divinity is St. Lorenzo: a ship ran aground on August 10 (Vespucci, 2013: 163). The night of August 10 is known as the night of St. Lorenzo, who lived in the 3rd century, due to the martyrdom of St. Lorenzo for not delivering the church's treasures to the Romans (Dore and Landers, 2013).[146] After this incident, Vespucci moved on (Vespucci, 2013: 163). According to Vespucci, by the permission of God, who helped him and his companions in their

[144]Among the known works of St. Augustine (354 A.D.-430 A.D.) are *Civitas Dei [The State of God]*, and *Confessiones, and Epistolae [Letters]* (Yıldırım, Ömer. 2005c. Augustinus kimdir? [Who is Augustine?] Web: http://www.felsefe.gen.tr/augustinus_kimdir.asp (accessed: 04/04/2017)).
[145] Yıldırım, Ömer. 2005d. Augustinus'un Etik (Ahlak Felsefesi) Anlayışı [Augustine's Understanding of Ethics (Moral Philosophy)]. Web: http://www.felsefe.gen.tr/filozoflar/augustinus_etik_ahlak_felsefesi_anlayisi.asp (accessed. 24/03/2017).
[146] Dore, Brian; Landers, Maria G. 07/08/2013. Stars in their eyes: Italy's *Notte di San Lorenzo*. *Postcards from Italy*: http://www.ciuitaly.com/blog/files/san-lorenzo-shooting-stars.php (accessed: 04/04/2017).

exploration, the new owners can now use these lands as they wish and continue their voyages of discovery: "*We have discovered a harbor which we call the Bay of All Saints"* (Vespucci, 2013: 163-164).

The convoy arrives at another piece of land (Vespucci, 2013: 164). Vespucci and his friends decide to build a castle where they have reached, and they cannot go any further, because the number of people on board has decreased (Vespucci, 2013: 164). Vespucci (2013: 164) describes the situation in this way: *"We didn't have enough people and we had many shortcomings."* They have needs such as sails and cloth (Perini, 2013: 164). Therefore, they decide to return to Portugal (Vespucci, 2013: 164). For Vespucci and his friends, nature offers materials for many human necessities, such as clothes, sails, and food, and they are produced by human labor. The explorer and his companions reconcile with the natives in order to establish dominion over their newly discovered lands, but arm their friends against fighting, for they will remain with many savage natives: *"There we have left 24 men, who will remain in the castle with six months' provisions, 12 cannons, and some weapons; we also made peace with the people of all that land"* (Vespucci, 2013: 164).

As can be understood from the above, in the letters sent to Amerigo Vespucci, who discovered new lands for commercial purposes and ensured the settlement of Europeans there, there are expressions showing that his main purpose was trade: Simone di Giovanni Vespucci, the brother of Guido Antonio Vespucci, Amerigo Vespucci's uncle and ambassador to Florence, mentions a sapphire stone in his letter to Amerigo Vespucci (Milan, February 26, 1483): *"I wanted to process your sapphire stone"* (Perini, 2013: 9). Francesco, Cafaggiolo, the farmer of

Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco dei Medici, wrote to Amerigo Vespucci on May 22 and June 20, 1488, that he sold barrels of barley and bottles of wine to Florentine families, and that pigeons, chickens, and cherries would also be sent (Perini, 2013: 10-11). In her letter (Cafaggiolo, 24 September 1489), Semiramide Appiani, who had two children, Laldomina and Averardo, from Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco, wanted a velvet beret with silver edging together with two pairs of sturdy shoes for her two children, and for Laldomina a comb made of ivory (Perini, 2013: 26). This letter shows that clothing and ornamental tools such as combs as well as materials derived from plants and animals are commercially indicative of social status; Francesco Cegia asks Vespucci for a silver chalice in Florence on May 31, 1489, as the wedding will take place at a friend's house (Perini, 2013: 18); Sandro Pagagnotti (Cafaggiolo, 14 October 1491), who wrote a letter to Amerigo Vespucci in Florence at the request of Semiramide Appiani, asked him for tableware such as twelve silver forks, carpets, napkins, spoons, salt shakers, and knives (Perini, 2013: 73). To obtain silk fabrics, Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco dei Medici asks Amerigo Vespucci for silkworm seeds (Mugello, April 1490) (Perini, 2013: 40). In fact, using a silver fork to eat, an ivory comb to comb hair, and wearing silk and velvet clothes show the luxury-mindedness of the European bourgeois society of the time. Amerigo Vespucci is interested in the resources that nature offers to people, which are as valuable as pearls (Fernández-Armesto, 2007: 88). The trade in gold and silver from the Americas to Spain continued until the 1550s, and in 1557, the Spaniard Bartolomeo de Medina mixed mercury with silver ore, increasing the need for silver (Braudel, 1995: 476). Braudel (1995: 463-464) states that gold came to Europe from Sudan; Portugal, on the other hand, after reaching Guinea in 1440, used this route for slave, gold, and ivory trade (Braudel, 1995: 469). The King of Portugal sets a

fixed price for pepper in 1504 (Braudel, 1995: 543). Thus, in Europe, in the 1500s, Portugal dominates trade.

As a result, the support for Amerigo Vespucci is for finding trade routes. Nature provides Vespucci and his companions with many plants, animals, fruits, and vegetables for humans to use to ensure their survival. As Vespucci describes in his letters, all these beings are for humans: pearls, gold, many precious stones, plants, and animals are God's gift to man. In contrast to this anthropocentric view, environmentalists advocate preventing the damage caused by the "mechanical world" view put forward by Bacon and Descartes, which stipulates that soil, animals, and plants must constantly serve humans like a machine to stop abuses on nature (Özdağ, 2005a: 29-30).

2. 5. Living Things in Nature That No Longer Exist or Need to Be Protected

In 1492, after Europeans had arrived in the Caribbean and the Americas, they began to expand their intercontinental trade networks; thanks to the global trade network they developed, food grown on different continents became accessible all over the world (Lewis ve Maslin, 2015: 174).[147] While potatoes, corns, and cassava were being brought to Europe from the American continent, sugar beet and wheat found in Europe started to be grown in the American continent (Lewis and Maslin, 2015: 174). In 1493*, Capsicum annuum* pepper reached as far as Spain and Africa from Bolivia and southern Brazil; first mentioned in Hungary

[147] Lewis, Simon L.; Mark A. Maslin. 2015. Defining the Anthropocene. *Nature* 519 (7542): 171-180.

in 1569, the use of chili pepper is now widespread throughout the world (Nunn and Qian, 2010: 171).[148] Tomatoes also originate in South America and are first mentioned in European texts in 1544 (Nunn and Qian, 2010: 171).

In addition, domesticable animals such as horses and cows are taken from Europe to the Americas, but maggots are also found in plant foods and animals that go to the Americas from Europe; minks from the Americas also come to Europe (Lewis and Maslin, 2015: 174). Columbus also brought various vegetables, grains such as barley, and animals such as horses, sheep, and cows from Europe to the American continent and the Caribbean Islands (Ferraro, 1875: 37). It is conceivable that the lands of the American continent were taken from the natives thanks to the cattle brought from Europe to the American continent, because the miners, sugar producers, and millers needed strength, so, they had to eat meat; oxen were also used to plow fields, but the soils became prone to erosion; sheep consumed some plants (Crosby, 2003: 109-112).[149]

It is assumed that the removal of plants and animals from their natural habitats to continents with different climatic conditions also caused changes in the atmosphere in 1610 (Lewis and Maslin, 2015: 175). Since foods began to be grown under climatic conditions different from those where they first appeared naturally, and due to the enslavement of the natives, the population of the American continent decreased from 54 million in 1492 to 6 million in 1650 (Lewis and Maslin, 2015:

[148] Nunn, Nathan; Nancy Qian. 2010. The Columbian exchange: A history of disease, food, and ideas. *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 24 (2): 163-188.
[149] Crosby, Alfred W. 2003. *The Columbian exchange: Biological and cultural consequences of 1492. 30th anniversary edition.* Westport, Connecticut; London: Praeger. [The exchange of goods from the New World (the Americas) to the Old World (the continents of Europe, Africa, and Asia) is known as the *'Columbian Exchange'* (See Crosby, 2003)].

175). Europeans infected the natives with smallpox (Crosby, 2003: 77). Apart from smallpox, which was seen in Europe in 1660, different diseases spread rapidly in Panama; diseases such as measles, typhoid, severe fever, diarrhea, pneumonia, and cold reached to the death of the natives (Crosby, 2003: 51).

In his letters, Amerigo Vespucci also expressed the understanding of intercontinental trade, which is thought to have caused changes in the atmosphere and the endangerment of many species today. According to Vespucci's letters, as shown in Figure 12, the natives of South America are cannibals, eating even strange animals and not knowing how to profit from the Amazon River and other natural resources.

Figure 14. Gutiérrez, Diego and Hieronymus Cock. 1562. *Americae sive qvartae orbis partis nova et exactissima descriptio*[150]

According to Amerigo Vespucci's letters, he came across different plant varieties and animals during the four presumed voyages. Given that Amerigo Vespucci reached South America and Central America in 1497, traveled through Brazil and Cape St. Augustine in 1499, Rio de la Plata and Rio de Janeiro in 1501, and the Southeastern coast of South America in 1503 ("Amerigo Vespucci," 2017), and discovered the commercial natural resources of the regions, one can now answer the question of which (a) plant and (b) animal species have been destroyed and extinct in these regions. However, Amerigo Vespucci does not give detailed information about the species of plants and animals (such as flowers, birds, parrots or rabbits) that he sees in his letters, nor does he specify their Latin scientific names. He only names four tree species that are endangered today: 'logwood' (see Vespucci, 2013: 97-98), 'yucca tree,' 'cassava' and 'inga' (see Vespucci, 2013: 143).

Logwoods are in danger today because the conditions of the Amazon Forest are changing: activities in the field of agriculture, the construction sector, infrastructure projects and human-caused fires are damaging the natural structure (The World Bank, 2014).[151] The acquisition of paint from the logwood since 1501 threatened the very existence of the tree's species until the invention of synthetic

[150] Gutiérrez, Diego; Hieronymus Cock. Lessing J. Rosenwald Collection. *Americae sive qvartae orbis partis nova et exactissima descriptio [America, the fourth part of the world and its complete depiction]*. [Antwerp: p.n., 1562]. Map. Web: https://www.loc.gov/item/map49000970/ (accessed: 04/07/2018). Credit: Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division, Washington, D.C., United States.

[151] The World Bank. 14/11/2014. Brazil: Much more flora in danger of extinction than originally thought. Web: http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2014/11/14/brasil-flora-peligro-extincion-biodiversidad-amazonia (accessed: 04/07/2018).

paint in 1875; its timber is still used in the construction of bows, and felling of trees in the area is still in danger of continuity (Kohli, 2008).[152] It is claimed that global warming damages yucca trees (Gray-Davidson, 2015).[153]

Today, it is argued that starch extracted from cassava root can replace flour because it does not contain gluten ("*From Our (Brazilian) Home to Yours*," 2008).[154] However, the plant's genetic structure has undergone changes over time and is losing its former quality: when 241 cassava species were examined 30 times, it was seen that there was a negative change in the structure of the plant by 26%; in Cornell University's School of Agriculture and Life Sciences, *The NextGen [Next Generation]* project plans to put an end to these changes (Garris, 2017).[155]

Inga trees, of which there are about 300 species in the Americas, some of which have large honeydew glands and others are narrow (Campbell, 2005: 139), [156] are endangered today due to highways, cattle herds, onion cultivation, and trade (Campbell, 2005: 143). Today, South American activists are trying to protect local trees (Breyer, 2018).[157]

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[152] Kohli. 29/04/2008. Valuable Information about Trees &; Plants. Web: http://trees-plants.blogspot.com/2008/04/ (accessed: 04/07/2018).
[153] Gray-Davidson, Osha. 28/10/2015. Climate Change Threatens an Iconic Desert Tree. *National Geographic*: https://news.nationalgeographic.com/2015/10/151028-joshua-tree-climate-change-mojave-desert/ (accessed: 04/07/2018).
[154] "From Our (Brazilian) Home to Yours." 02/01/2008. Cassava or Yucca Root - Grow Your Own #5. Web: http://fromourhometoyours-en.blogspot.com/2008/01/cassava-or-yucca-grow-your-own-5.html (accessed:04/07/2018).
[155] Garris, Amanda. 27/04/2017. Cassava is genetically decaying, putting staple crop at risk. *Cornell Chronicle*: http://news.cornell.edu/stories/2017/04/cassava-genetically-decaying-putting-staple-crop-risk(accessed: 04/07/2018).
[156] Campbell, David G. 2005. *A land of ghosts: The braided lives of people and the forest in far western Amazonia*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
[157] Breyer, Melissa. 08/03/2018. Women are marrying trees in Mexico. *TreeHugger*: https://www.treehugger.com/conservation/why-are-women-marrying-trees-mexico.html (accessed: 04/07/2018).

At this point, other plants that are endangered today native to the South American region can also be mentioned. *Coleocephalocereus purpureus* is a species of cactus that grows in Minas Gerais, Brazil; it's about 90 centimeters long ("Coleocephalocereus Purpureus," 2017).[158]

The tubular yellow flower, called tatula (*Genus Brugmansia*), grows around Brazil, and is 8 meters tall and is in the group of ivy plants that never fade; South American natives used it to make medicines, but it can no longer be found (Petruzzello, 2017).[159]

According to Hubbell et al., trees known as the '*Hill Crown*' in the vicinity of Brazil's Amazon Forests are on the verge of extinction; the extinction of plant species is caused by natural gas and oil production, cattle breeding, soybean farming, road construction, fires, hunting, and the establishment of new settlements (Feeley and Silman, 2009: 12382).[160]

There are also warnings that if forests in Brazil are destroyed, the existence of wild cocoa, açai berries, Brazil nuts, and many other fruits will be endangered; dam constructions alongside droughts and fires caused by global warming and mining in the region are damaging plants (Carrington, 2015).[161]

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[158] "Coleocephalocereus purpureus." 2017.*Llifle.Com*. Web: http://www.llifle.com/Encyclopedia/CACTI/Family/Cactaceae/6341/Coleocephalocereus_purpureus (accessed: 15/10/2017).

[159] Petruzzello, Melissa. 30/06/2017. "Angel's trumpet." *Encyclopædia Britannica*: https://www.britannica.com/plant/angels-trumpet (accessed: 15/11/2017).

[160] Feeley, Kenneth J.; Miles, R. Silman. 2009. Extinction risks of Amazonian plant species. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 106 (30): 12382-12387.

[161] Carrington, Damian. 20/11/2015. Half of tree species in the Amazon at risk of extinction, say scientists. *The Guardian*: https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/nov/20/half-tree-species-amazon-risk-extinction-study (accessed: 15/11/2017).

There are also many animal species that are now endangered around South America. For Vespucci (2013: 90), parrots fascinate with their colors. An endangered bird species that lived in the eastern United States from the present-day New York state to the Gulf of Mexico is known to be the Carolina parrot (*Conuropsis carolinensis*): its body is green, its head is yellow, and its beak is red; they are thought to have disappeared when their habitats turned into fields; the last was murdered in 1904 in Florida, United States ("The Last Carolina Parakeet," 2015). It is claimed that the dark blue Hyacinth parrot[162] (*Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus*) is on the verge of extinction due to oil pipelines in Bolivia, and only one male light blue or turquoise Spix parrot (*Cyanopsitta spixii*) remains in the Brazilian state of Bahia (Radford, 1999).[163] Ferraro (1875: 43) argues that Columbus brought parrots to Europe, whose shoulders and body were red and whose wings were of other colors. The Red Ara parrots (*Ara macao*), which still live in the tropical forests of Mexico and Brazil today, have the characteristics noted by Ferraro (1875: 43); there are also the endangered Red Cuban parrots (Ara tricolor parrots) ("Scarlet Macaw (Ara macao)," n.d.)[164] They have the same characteristics: although their wings are blue, their whole bodies are red, with a yellow part on the back of their heads (see Orihuela, 2018).[165] Many parrots were slaughtered for their meat or feathers by those who came to settle in the Americas after Columbus (Orihuela, 2018). Bartolemé de las Casas (1876: V, 30)[166] writes that during the

[162] "The Last Carolina Parakeet." 2015. *John James Audubon Center at Mill Grove*. Web: http://johnjames.audubon.org/last-carolina-parakeet (accessed: 15/10/2017).
[163] Radford, Tim. 06/08/1999. Parrots faced with threat of extinction. *The Guardian*: https://www.theguardian.com/uk/1999/aug/06/timradford (accessed: 04/07/2018).
[164] "Scarlet Macaw (*Ara macao*)," Neotropical Birds Online (T. S. Schulenberg, Editor). Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, N.Y., United States. *Neotropical Birds Online*: https://neotropical.birds.cornell.edu/Species-Account/nb/species/scamac1 (accessed: 04/07/2018).
[165] Orihuela, Joha. 25/04/2018. Ara tricolor: Cuba's extinct endemic macaw. *Fossil Matter*: http://fossilmatter.blogspot.com/2018/04/ara-tricolor-cubas-extinct-endemic-macaw.html (accessed: 04/07/2018).
[166] de las Casas, Bartolemé. 1876. *Historia de las Indias*. Madrid: Imprenta de Miguel Ginesta.

invasion of Cuba by the Spaniard Diego Velázquez (between 1511 and 1513), more than 10,000 parrots were slaughtered and eaten in fifteen days.

The Caribbean Monk seal, which was wiped out in the Caribbean from the 15th century onwards due to the invasion and hunting of Europeans (*Monachus tropicalis*) has not been seen since 1950 (Gerken, 2013).[167] It is a specific fish that lives near the Caribbean, with a short tail, claws, and short-haired palms: because of the prominence of its canines, it differs from other fish (Adam, 2004: 1).[168]

In addition, medium- and large-sized butterflies and silky anteaters belonging to Parias are on the verge of extinction due to changes in their natural habitat, as well as the Margay cats (*Leopardus wiedii*), kariyakus (*Mazama rufina bricenii*), and red siskins (*Carduelis cucullata*), which have been seen in the vicinity of Venezuela) are on the verge of extinction for the same reasons ("The Venezuela's Eco Portal to Eco-Tourism & Ecology," 2017).[169] In Curaçao, the Orizomin rodent is no longer observed in the area; therefore, it has been declared as extinct (MacFarlane and Debrot, 2001).[170]

Due to the arrival of European colonists in Puerto Rico, many animals are threatened with extinction: the island mosquitoes (*Nesophontes edithae*) and the rodents *Elasmodontomys obliquus, Heteropsomys insulans, Puertoricomys*

[167] Gerken, James. 22/10/2013. 11 Animals That Are Now Extinct... Thanks to Humans. *Huffpost UK*: https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/10/22/11-extinct-animals_n_4078988.html (accessed: 04/12/2017).
[168] Adam, Peter J. 2004. Monachus tropicalis. *Mammalian Species* 747: 1-9.
[169] "The Venezuela's Eco Portal to Eco-Tourism &; Ecology." 2017. *Ecoportal.Tripod.Com*. Web: http://ecoportal.tripod.com/extinction.htm (accessed: 21/11/2017).
[170] McFarlane, Donald A.; Adolphe Debrot. 2001. An extinct Oryzomyine rodent from the Quaternary of Curaçao, Netherlands Antilles. *Caribbean Journal of Science* 37 (3-4): 182-184.

corozalus, Tainotherium valei, and *Isolobodon portoricensis* are not found today (Turvey, Oliver, Narganes–Storde, and Rye, 2007).[171]

As for the campaigns for the protection of the species there, a campaign was carried out between 2001 and 2003 against the continuous bombing of Vieques Island, which belongs to Puerto Rico, during the exercises of the US Navy (Paravisini-Gebert, 2010: 131).[172] The army withdrew from the island in May 2003; the island was under the control of the American army, and the United States turned the island into a wildlife reserve (Paravisini-Gebert, 2010: 132). Haitian lands are also about to lose their fertility today (Paravisini-Gebert, 2010: 132). Some formerly existing frog species in Haiti do not exist today, but extinct species are being considered for future cloning ("Rescue Missions Underway to Save Haiti's Species from Mass Extinctions," 2010).[173]

In addition, one of the animals that has become extinct today due to invasion is the dodo (*Raphus cucullatus*): in 1598, Dutch Vice Admiral Wybrand van Warwijck found the dodo in Mauritius, but in 1700 the dodo bird became extinct (Kovarik, 2012).[174] The extinction of the dodo birds is associated with the fact that sailors who arrived in Mauritius, close to Africa in the Indian Ocean, in 1507 ate these birds and their eggs, turned their habitats into tea and sugar plantations, and

[171] Turvey, Samuel T.; Oliver, Jose R.; Narganes-Storde, Yvonne M.; Rye, Philip. 2007. Late Holocene extinction of Puerto Rican native land mammals. *Biology Letters* 3 (2): 193–196.
[172] Paravisini–Gebert, Lizabeth. 2010. Caribbean utopias and dystopias: The emergence of the environmental writer and artist. *The natural world in Latin American literatures: Ecocritical essays on twentieth century writings,* edited by Adrian Taylor Kane, 113–135. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., Publishers.
[173] "Rescue Missions Underway to Save Haiti's Species from Mass Extinctions." — Penn State: Eberly College of Science. 16/11/2010. *Science.Psu.Edu*. Web: http://science.psu.edu/news-and-events/2010-news/Hedges11-2010 (accessed: 04/12/2017).
[174] Kovarik, William. 2012. Environmental History Timeline. Web: http://environmentalhistory.org/about/ (accessed: 08/08/2017).

even took some of them to Europe and removed them from their natural habitat ("Dodo Bird: Endangered Animals," 2015).[175] They also died of starvation, as these birds feed on the fruit of the Dodo tree and this tree would dry out and disappear over time ("Dodo Bird: Endangered Animals," 2015). The beaks of the dodo birds are huge and curved, while their bodies are fat; their plumage is short; they are said to make a sound similar to that of ducks ("Dodo Bird: Endangered Animals," 2015).

In addition to plants and animals, human tribes in South America, which will be wiped out by the disappearance of forests today, are also struggling to survive. For example, the Yanomami tribe: the Yanomami live in the rainforests and mountainous areas of Brazil and southern Venezuela; their total population is about 35,000 people; they live in the 8.2 million hectare Alto Orinoco, the Casiquiare Biosphere Reserve; because of gold miners, the release of mercury in the areas where they live causes the spread of malaria and pollutes rivers and forests; they live in shared houses with a capacity of 400 people of round shape; as they are shamanists, they believe that every tree, rock, or mountain has a soul; they are of the view that all are equal (Survival International, 2017a).[176] They have no leaders, but they established an institution called 'Horonami' in 2011 to protect their rights in Venezuela, where their ancestors settled 15,000 years ago (Survival International, 2017a). In the Amazon jungle in Brazil, members of another tribe called '*Awá'* make a living by hunting; a tribe called '*Piripkura*' has members who speak a language called '*Tupi-Kawahib*'also live in the same area, while in the Javari Valley on the Brazil–Peru border, members of another tribe called 'Korubo'

[175] "Dodo Bird: Endangered Animals." 2015. *Bilgimanya*. Web: http://www.bilgimanya.com/dodo-kusu-nesli-tukenen-hayvanlar/ (accessed: 15/10/2017).
[176] Survival International. 2017a. "Yanomami." *Survivalinternational.Org*. Web: https://www.survivalinternational.org/tribes/yanomami (accessed: 15/11/2017).

are also trying to survive (Survival International, 2017b).[177] The FUNAI, or National Indigenous Foundation, which operates under the Brazilian government, is responsible for the protection of indigenous people and the areas they live in (Survival International, 2017b).

Given all this, the natives should be preserved as well as the animals and plants described by Amerigo Vespucci, because when there is unity in diversity, people have much to learn from each other, including herbal medicine and natural nutrition. Projects for the protection of natural species should be produced and supported.

[177] Survival International. 2017b. "Uncontacted Indians of Brazil." *Survivalinternational.Org*. Web: https://www.survivalinternational.org/tribes/uncontacted-brazil (accessed: 03/12/2017).

3. CONCLUSION

According to the context of Amerigo Vespucci's nine letters, he is alleged to have made four voyages to the Americas: the first in 1497 to South America and Central America; the second in 1499 to Brazil and Cape St. Augustine; the third, in 1501 from Rio de la Plata and Rio de Janeiro to Patagonia, and the last in 1503 to the southeastern coast of South America ("Amerigo Vespucci," 2017). However, according to Fernández-Armesto (2007: 121-123), there are three reasons to prove that his seventh letter (Lisbon, 1502-1503) does not belong to Vespucci: (a) the letter was edited by the editors using public language; (b) it may be concluded that the text was written in Latin or translated from Italian into Latin in order to reach a wider audience[178]; (c) it is inaccurate information that Vespucci, who is supposed to have made two voyages on behalf of the King of Spain, mentions in his letter to an unknown Florentine a third expedition that shows that he had discovered America before Columbus. Furthermore, Roukema (1962) suggests that the date of Vespucci's supposed voyage in 1497 was erroneous in that he wanted to give the impression that he had traveled south, starting in the Gulf of Honduras earlier than Christopher Columbus, and may have been included later in his eighth letter. Since the Italian of this letter is mediocre and holds indecent descriptions of the natives, it is claimed that it was not written by Vespucci (Fernandez-Armesto, 2013: 127-128). Thus, it is assumed that Vespucci made only two voyages: his expeditions to the coast of South America on behalf of Spain between 1499 and 1500, and to the coast of Brazil on behalf of Portugal in 1501 or 1502, are argued to be correct (De Asúa and French, 2016: 9-10).

[178] In his first letter, Vespucci states that he is still hesitant to send Latin texts to his father.

In general, it is seen from what Amerigo Vespucci describes in his nine letters that in the late 15th and early 16th centuries, he was prejudiced against the natives living in South America and the Caribbean, and that the main source of this prejudice was the search for tradeable goods in the region. According to what he wrote in his first letter, Vespucci was a member of a Catholic family committed to his cultural values. From his second letter information is obtained about the currency of the period. In his third letter, he reveals his admiration for the lush green trees, birds, lions, gazelles, goats, wild boars, rabbits, and other kinds of animals he saw on the South American continent. He says that he bought cotton and wood from around Venezuela and collected some precious stones in South America, such as pearls, gold, beryl, rubies and amethysts, about which he said that they were purple. He always portrays the natives as cannibals. In his fourth letter, he refers to the commercial discoveries of Portugal. In his fifth letter, he explains that the natives were long-lived and that their land was full of fruits and wild animals. He claims that the natives, who are thought to consume fruits, fish, and various plants as food sources, are cannibals and polygamists, and that they are primitive, because they have no legal authority. In his sixth letter, he advocates the enslavement of the natives, since they do not understand trade: they do not accept rings with gold crosses or precious stones as gifts. In his seventh letter, Vespucci also mentions the green and lush trees of South America: they produce their fruits and oils for humans. In his eighth letter, he describes how the natives plundered their homes; he mentions that a deserted island is full of trees and birds. In his ninth letter, he writes that since the natives did not have as much knowledge of trade as that of the Arabs, Portugal's trade in the Atlantic Ocean would be different from that with the Arabs. In none of his letters does he give detailed information about the species of animals and plants

he saw and admired. Nevertheless, conclusions can be drawn from his letters concerning different branches of humanities.

The environmental humanities are related to the environmentalist criticism approach in the context of human values, justice, science policies, and ethical principles, because human beings come from various cultural backgrounds and are in constant interaction with other living species (Bird Rose, van Dooren, Chrulew, Cooke, Kearnes and O'Gorman, 2012: 2).[179] In his new arrival in America, Amerigo Vespucci encounters a different nature and the people living in this natural environment, as well as various kinds of animals, medicinal foods and plants, and natural mineral resources. Vespucci admires animals and plants of distinct species from the natural beauties he encounters for the first time; he feels the need to praise and pray to God by his faith in the face of the food offered by nature. As in his fourth letter, the King of Portugal said that he was rich enough to give financial support to his travel to find new trade routes, and for this reason, he wishes, *"May God bless him!"* (Vespucci, 2013: 108). Vespucci (2013: 108) even hopes that when he dies, his soul will find peace in Heaven, since his journey was so dangerous, "*for the purpose of serving God and the world."* While praising the natural wonders created by God, Amerigo Vespucci's main goal is to be acclaimed in the merchant profession. According to Vespucci, all living things that are the work of God are in the service of humans; he derived this view from both the Bible and Gaius Secundus Pliny's *Natural History*, as noted by Lynn White (1967, 1996) in his description of anthropocentric merchants. Pliny's *Natural History* argues that

[179] Bird Rose, Deborah; Thom van Dooren; Matthew Chrulew; Stuart Cooke; Matthew Kearnes; Emily O'Gorman. 2012. Thinking through the environment, unsettling the humanities. *Environmental Humanities* 1: 1-5.

all plants and animals in nature are useful food sources for humans, and that natural phenomena such as winds and rains exist for human survival.

In this study, while the understanding of nature in Amerigo Vespucci's letters is analyzed with the environmentalist criticism approach, the subjects of nature praise and nature destruction are examined under different headings and some conclusions have been reached in the fields of social anthropology, philosophy, theology, history, and ethics within the scope of environmental humanities.

First, Amerigo Vespucci, through a social anthropological approach to the direction of Marcel Mauss, touches on the exchange of goods of the natives of the American continent and their living in huts, treating diseases, and developing nutrients. Marcel Mauss (1872 – 1950) argues in *Essai sur le don: Forme et raison de l'échange dans les sociétés archaïques* (1925)[180] that the exchange of gifts was a method of setting up new social relations and friendships rather than a method of trade in primitive societies. Vespucci also refers to the fact that the natives helped themselves in exchange for small objects such as bells and mirrors. According to both Mauss and Vespucci, gift-giving is a form of trade. Amerigo Vespucci talks about the natives' skin color, natural food, methods of treatment and hostility; he is also surprised that the natives are not interested in trade and the precious stones around them as he understood it.

[180] Mauss, Marcel. 1925. *Essai sur le don: Forme et raison de l'échange dans les sociétés archaïques [Essay on the gift: The mode and reason of exchange in primitive societies].* Paris: Librairie Félix Alcan.

Secondly, philosophically, Vespucci is influenced by the views of many astronomers or philosophers of cosmology. Among them were Ptolemy, Ibn-Battuta and Ibn-Gubayr. As his philosophy of nature, he accepts the view of Pliny that nature is full of food and healing resources. Amerigo Vespucci was inspired by The book *The Natural History* by Gaius Plinius Secundus about the fact that medicines can be produced from natural sources such as plants and animals, and that some stones are very valuable, about the types of celestial bodies and winds and their benefits to humans, and about difficult natural phenomena such as storms and lightning.

Third, from the point of view of theology or philosophy of religion, Vespucci is influenced by the philosophies of Christian saints such as St. Francesco, St. Tomaso, and St. Augustine. Nature, according to him, is a wonderful work of God, and nature is at the service of humans following the knowledge he has acquired from the Bible.

Fourthly, in terms of history, Amerigo Vespucci, with his letters of certain dates, gives a lot of information about the political order of the late 15th and early 16th centuries, the trade expeditions for natural resources, and commercial culture.

Fifth, as to the conception of justice and ethical principles encompassed by the knowledge of morality in Amerigo Vespucci's letters, it is understood that he was astonished and found primitive to see that the natives had no legal systems and often no rulers. On a moral level, Vespucci criticizes the natives for walking around naked and living without laws and rulers.

In addition, the answers to the five important questions in the second part of this research reveal the contradiction between Amerigo Vespucci's praise for nature and his admiration for nature and his instinct to exploit nature by obtaining commercial resources from it, as said below.

In response to the first research question, Vespucci discovers new locations in South and Central America; Brazil, Venezuela and the Caribbean are among the places he has seen. To explore these places, as a sailor, he figures out the direction of the stars according to their positions and sometimes uses the power of the winds.

In response to the second research question, despite Vespucci's love, respect, and admiration for God and his creations, a contradiction arises in him in the face of all natural products, rooted in his desire for trade. He always wants to trade birds, natives, spices, products of trees such as resin and paint, and other natural resources. However, the world is a whole with its environmental order, vegetation, animals, liquids, soil species and gases; whoever harms one of them unethically, damages the entire environmental system (Callicott, 1989: 25).[181] At this point, Amerigo Vespucci's praise of nature is directed first at animals and then at natural plants and nutrients, but since commercial profits will be obtained from natural resources, Amerigo Vespucci wants to destroy nature, capture some animals and take them to Europe, trade medicinal plants and fruits, precious stones and gold, while enslaving the wild natives. Thus, the main reason why Amerigo Vespucci praises nature is that he admires birds, fish, all kinds of animals, fragrant plants, and fruits, and finds them very beautiful is commercial; on the other hand, the views

[181] Callicott, J. Baird. 1989. *In defense of the land ethic: Essays in environmental philosophy*. Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press.

that prepare today's destruction of nature emerge with the desire to eat these fish and animals and to take birds and animals to Europe by ship. He admires the well-proportioned bodies of the natives and enslaves those who are captured by them.

From the point of view of environmentalism, Amerigo Vespucci admires all animals, plants, celestial bodies, forests, and beaches: their colors and varieties srengthen his belief. Amerigo Vespucci, on the other hand, is a merchant sailor; by choosing slaves from the natives, he creates the image of a colonizer or invader.

The trade of the natural resources of the American continent plays a key role in the development of Europe. Spices, precious stones, gold, fruits, and animals can find buyers in Europe. However, as the people of this new continent, far from Europe, live in the natural environment, they are wild or savage. Amerigo Vespucci does not consider them to be equal to civilized and European Christian people, because they are naked, aggressive, eat savagely, and have no rule of law, but try to heal the sick by natural methods, and eat strange animals, and they are cannibals. According to Vespucci, people in these primitive conditions could only be slaves, and their natural resources could therefore be used by modern, well-dressed, faithful, law-abiding Europeans who followed certain etiquette rules when they ate.

As an answer to the third question, nature offers humans many plants and their oils as medicines against diseases. Plants and fruits, which are the natural richness of the new soils, are particularly important from a commercial point of view, as they are a source of health for Europe. Different natural sources are important for the treatment of different diseases, according to Amerigo Vespucci. Amerigo Vespucci argues that he saw that if the air was clean, people lived long,

women could even live to be one hundred and fifty years old. Thus, Amerigo Vespucci learned that with its products, nature is both nourishing like a mother and at the service of humans like a machine, and in his letters, he expresses what he has learned.

The production and acquisition of basic human needs, such as foods and drinks, offered by nature, take place, according to the letters of Amerigo Vespucci, through fierce battles and successfully fighting natural disasters. According to Vespucci, nature has an unlimited number of fruits, plants, and animals. Native Americans consume them to survive. Native Americans even produce wine from grains. Their only flaw is that they eat their enemies. Therefore, in Vespucci, the idea that the land of these savage and primitive people, who ate their enemies, could be used by developed societies. The claim of cannibalism can be thought of as an idea put forward by Vespucci and a way of defending his own deeds in order to use the natural resources of these people's lands. Claude Lévi-Strauss (1961),[182] who lived in the 20th century, conducted an anthropological field research in Brazil with the indigenous people whose ancestors Amerigo Vespucci saw: unlike Vespucci, he studied the pictures and rituals that the natives drew on their naked bodies, and even touched on their food cultures. Lévi-Strauss (1965),[183] notes that in South American tribes [184] 'boiled' and 'fried' meals were used as metaphors to write down status according to the social class of the people to whom they were served; human flesh was among these raw and cooked dishes. In this context, *'endo-cannibalisme'*

[182] Lévi-Strauss, Claude. 1961. *Tristes Tropiques: An anthropological study of primitive societies in Brazil*. Translator: John Russell. New York: Criterion.
[183] Lévi-Strauss, Claude. 1965. Le triangle culinaire. *Arc* 26: 19-29.
[184] Paraguay'daki Guayaki kabilesi üyeleri, bir çocuğa isim koyma töreninde, misafirler aile bireyleri olduğunda, haşlanmış et ikram ederler, avladıkları diğer hayvanları ise kızartırlar; Güney Brezilya'daki Kaïngang kabilesi üyeleri de haşlanmış eti dul kalan kadın veya erkeğe sunarlar (Lévi-Strauss, 1965).

(family cannibalism/cannibalism) is the eating of a family member after boiling her or him, whereas '*exo-cannibalisme'* (non-family cannibalism/cannibalism) is the eating of an enemy by frying (Lévi-Strauss, 1965). Boiled meals mean solidarity within the group, whereas fried meals reveal social relations as treats offered to guests (Shankman, 1969: 58).[185] According to Lévi-Strauss (2014: 110), every ethnologist knows that cannibalism exists, but the cannibalism referred to by the Jesuits and travelers in South America in the 16th century cannot be perceived as 'killing one's enemies for the purpose of food.' Lévi-Strauss (2014: 110) suggests that there are logical explanations for cannibalism: if there is famine, people can eat dead human flesh for 'food' purposes; 'politically' people can eat their enemies. Dead flesh can be used in rituals for 'magic' purposes.

The foundations of the idea of cannibalism put forward by Lévi-Strauss are also found in the letters of Amerigo Vespucci, who speaks of South American tribes with prejudice, but like the voyagers and Jesuit priests discussed by Lévi-Strauss, Vespucci, who was in the south of the American continent in the 16th century, does not explain in his letters the reasons underlying the cannibalistic behavior of the natives. In this case, he discredited the natives by portraying them as primitive and savage people who engaged in cannibalism for no obvious reason or sometimes only by eating their enemies after killing them. Therefore, their natural resources must be used by Europeans: the lands of the natives, who lead an unlawful and savage life, can pass to the rule of Europeans.

[185] Shankman, Paul. 1969. Le Roti et le bouilli: Levi-Strauss' theory of cannibalism. *American Anthropologist* 71 (1): 54-69.

In addition, with regard to the question of nature being a machine for Amerigo Vespucci, Bacon advocates the enslavement and subservience of nature to humans; since Descartes sees the 'material universe' as a 'machine,' he defends the thesis that 'since the functioning of nature is subject to mechanical rules, everything in the material world can be explained by the order and movement of the parts that make it up' (Yaylı and Yaslıkaya, 2015: 455). With Descartes, nature is no longer an 'organism' but a 'machine' (Yaylı ve Yaslıkaya, 2015: 455). Özdağ (2005a: 24-25) explains that this 'mechanical world' thesis of Bacon and Descartes legitimizes the exploitation of nature. In fact, according to Amerigo Vespucci, as Bacon argued, nature, that is, the soil, animals, plants, and some people of different races, should serve other people. According to him, some people can be enslaved, as he describes in his letters, and animals and plants must offer humans substances such as food, clothing, and paint. Therefore, according to Vespucci, nature is, as Descartes argued, a machine that gives products in the service of people. The necessity of nature to offer its products to humans in the form of a slave and systematically functioning machine existed in Amerigo Vespucci before Bacon and Descartes: all the products of the newly discovered land should be exploited for commercial purposes. The utilitarian approach to nature in Amerigo Vespucci's letters is also present in other thinkers and travelers. Montaigne, a 16th-century thinker who opposed the view of natives as savage primitives, supports the idea that people ascribe the adjective 'barbaric' to practices to which they are not accustomed (see Olender [preface in Lévi-Strauss], 2014: 9). Montaigne takes care of the natives of Brazil and calls them "those cannibals of mine" (Lévi-Strauss, 2014: 94). Lévi-Strauss (2014: 93) notes that during the Renaissance period in the 16th century, studies were carried out on Ancient Greek and Latin texts, according to the knowledge that Europe had acquired from the classics, made comments about the

natives, and that during this period, places near the American continent were called by Europeans to evoke ancient Greek and Roman civilizations such as Atlantis (Atlantic Ocean), or Aden - 'Garden of Eden.' Thus, in the 16th century, the 'customs of the New World natives' for Europeans were written in line with the accounts of ancient Greek and Roman writers (Lévi-Strauss, 2014: 93). The sources that Amerigo Vespucci used to understand the natural resources of the places in South America that he saw for the first time also belong to the classics: he drew on the directions and directions of the ancient Greek scholar Ptolemy of Alexandria and from Pliny on the healing foods that could be obtained from animals and plants.

Amerigo Vespucci, in keeping with what Michel de Montaigne[186], a thinker who was surprised by the plight of slaves brought to Rouen from South America (see Lévi-Strauss, 2014: 93-94) was inspired by Greek mythology. Christopher Columbus (see Livingstone, 2015)[187] likened the natives to dog-nosed creatures that fed on human flesh, in accordance with what Michel de Montaigne stated about the travelers of this period (see Lévi-Strauss, 2014: 93-94); similarly, seeing that the natives lived far from the Renaissance culture in Europe, Vespucci claimed that they were cannibals, restricting them from having a say over the lands they owned, and offering the natural riches of these lands to the Europeans.

As an answer to the fourth question, many species are threatened with extinction today; the indigenous tribes in Brazil are under protection.

[186] Michel de Montaigne (1533 – 1592) does not accuse the natives of being barbarians; on the contrary, he admires the fact that they treat everyone equally and are free from hypocrisy and jealousy; he finds them naïve (See Montaigne, Michel too. 2008. "On cannibals." *Essays*. Translator: Sabahattin Eyüboğlu. Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası).

[187] Livingstone, Stephenie. 09/03/2015. History Re-Written: Christopher Columbus and the Cannibals. Web: https://www.floridamuseum.ufl.edu/science/history-re-written-christopher-columbus-and-the-cannibals/ (accessed: 26/02/2018).

In the context of the answer to the fifth question, the entire study reveals that Amerigo Vespucci, a seafaring merchant, portrayed the natives as cannibals and primitives to take commercial advantage of the nature of his newly discovered places.

In conclusion, the answers to the research questions in the second part consist of the above explanations.

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APPENDIX 1: SUMMARIES OF AMERIGO VESPUCCI'S LETTERS

1) Amerigo Vespucci's letter to his father, Mr. Anastagio Vespucci, in Florence (Trebbio del Mugello, 19 October 1476; pages 3-4)

This letter reveals that during the reign of Amerigo Vespucci, there was a plague epidemic that developed due to the filth of the environment. It is also understood from this letter that Amerigo Vespucci came from a Catholic family and received Catholic culture.

In this letter, which is in Latin, Amerigo Vespucci explains that at his father's request, he wrote a small Latin grammar book to study. Writing this letter, he says that his uncle asked his father to take care of a poor neighbor; he also says hello to his mother and all his relatives. From this letter, it can be understood that the neighborly and kinship relations of the period were strong. Vespucci's only fear is the plague, which spreads from the filth of the environment and mice. Since Amerigo's name is the Latin version of Emericus, he signs this Latin letter *as "Emericus Vespucius."* As can be seen from this letter, since Amerigo Vespucci's family was a Catholic family committed to cultural values, he named him a saint: St. Amerigo's day is July 15; St. Amerigo is a confessor priest in Bamberg; Catholics who bear the name Amerigo celebrate July 15 as name day ("Santi, Beati e Testimoni," n.d.)[188]

[188] Santi, beati e testimoni: Amerigo. n.d. Web: http://www.santiebeati.it/nomi/Detailed/1229.html (accessed 04/04/2017).

2) Amerigo Vespucci's letter to the vicar of the duke of Mantua in Genoa (Seville, 30 December 1492; page 87)

In this short commercial letter, Amerigo Vespucci says that Antonio Salimbeni, the ambassador of the master of Mantua, has not been there for about eight days and that the recipient *must* give 2 (two) '*charlini*' to the courier. This letter makes it clear that from a commercial point of view, *there was a currency known as charlini'* in that period.

3) Amerigo Vespucci's letter to Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco dei Medici (Seville, 28 July 1500; pages 88-101)

In this letter, Amerigo Vespucci expresses his admiration for the natural beauty of the land he has just met, but depicts the natives as primitives, cannibals, and naked, because he intends to seize the natural values in the hands of the natives for commercial purposes. In this letter, Amerigo Vespucci states that he had reached a coast of India a month earlier. He argues that there is good news as well as the fruit eaten at the end of the main meal. On May 18, 1499, he wrote that he reached the Canary Islands by passing through the African coast on his journey with the financial support of the King of Spain with two caravels. He says that he has arrived at Gomera, one of these islands. This place is full of lush, yellow-turning, fragrant, and aromatic trees. Vespucci and his friends take drinking water from the freshwater sources they find and fill it into their bottles. They reach Cape Cattigara, which they consider to be the place where the Asian Continent ends. Vespucci is also fascinated by the two huge rivers they meet there. While Vespucci is riding

along one of these rivers with his friends, he meets a group of people. He admires the colors and songs of the birds he sees there.

Vespucci and his friends are swept away by a wind that is stronger than the wind blowing in Gibraltar and Messina. He tries to take advantage of the positions of the stars to find his way as a sailor. He thinks that they are moving in the latitude of the city of Cadiz. On August 23, 1499, the Moon met Mars at the same point. He sees a variety of animals. He meets strange-looking people: their skin color is darker than that of Vespucci and his friends; They are naked and cannibalistic: their main source of food is human flesh. They have canoes, they don't eat women, but they just make them slaves. Their weapons are bows and arrows. As Vespucci and his colleagues make their way along this island, they meet other groups of people. Then they set out and arrived at the Gulf of Parias: the natives here offer them fruity wine, fruits, and fish, as well as parrots; these people are not cannibals. Vespucci writes that 400 leagues are ahead, they encountered a continent on the Eastern border of Asia: there are different kinds of animals there: lions, gazelles, goats, wild boars, rabbits, and several other animals that live on land. As Vespucci and his team move through these lands, they meet a snake eight arm's lengths and are so terrified of it that they return to their sea voyage. After advancing another 400 leagues from the shore, they encounter people who try to shoot bows and arrows at them. They descend to this land, where they come by boat; they fight them and seize their homes. A 55-year-old Portuguese sailor also encouraged them to fight the natives: they stayed in a port for twenty days to heal the wounds they had received from this battle. They continue their way and arrive at an island 15 leagues away from the continent. This is Curaçao. Although the people of the island are afraid of them and run away, a woman invites them to her house to offer them drinks. Vespucci and

his friends decide to capture and take away two fifteen-year-old women as slaves as a gift to the King. The people of this island are quite large. Vespucci, who said that he went to an island 10 leagues further from there, reached Venezuela, which he likened to Venice. Together with his team, he buys cotton and wood from there. He says that 300 leagues further away they captured people who spoke seven different languages with the intention of enslaving them; he believes that more than 1000 languages are spoken in the world; he emphasizes that he himself has witnessed the speaking of more than 40 of these languages. About 700 leagues away, he reaches a place called '*Hispaniola*', which was discovered by Christopher Columbus six years ago. There were Christians here, and Vespucci and his friends stayed there for two months, as they could easily obtain provisions and food from them. Noting that there were more than a thousand islands inhabited by naked people to the north, Vespucci said that when he and his friends proceeded 200 leagues south, they took 232 slaves from the places they encountered; they cross the bay every 67 days to reach the Azur Islands, which belonged to the King of Portugal. They are 300 leagues away from Cadiz. On this route, they stop at the Canary Islands and Madera Island, and eventually return to Cadiz.

Vespucci, who thought he was traveling along the coast of Asia during his thirteen-month journey, says that he decided with his compass that he had traveled 5,000 leagues, that is, 20,000 miles. As they move south from the 6.5th degree of the equinox line, they come across naked people speaking other languages, wild animals, aromatic trees, and pearls and gold. From here, Vespucci and his friends collect beryl stones, as well as other stones resembling ruby and amethyst. They have also got 14 pink pearls. Queen Isabella of Castile, Queen of Spain, loves jewelry; she likes precious stones. Vespucci and his friends sell their slaves in

Cadiz. Although Vespucci set out with a group of 57 people, he states that two people were killed by the locals on his return.

Towards the middle of September, Vespucci predicted that King Ferdinand of Spain and King Manuel I of Portugal would have three ships built and given to him; he hopes to see the Indian Ocean, Ceylon, and Bangladesh. Vespucci, who would draw two maps showing that the earth was round, would later send these maps to Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco dei Medici.

4) Amerigo Vespucci's letter to Lorenzo di Piefrancesco dei Medici (Cape Verde, 4 June 1501; pages 102-108)

This letter reveals that Vespucci thought of exploiting the world's natural wealth for trade as a form of service to God; therefore, Amerigo Vespucci also mentions the trade that Portugal was doing.

Amerigo Vespucci states that he was in Lisbon on May 8, 1501, but that he had embarked on a new journey to serve God "*with the help of the Holy Spirit,*" that is, with the power he gave, following his religious belief. He also underlines that he made this trip at the request of the King of Portugal. After passing through the Canary Islands, cruising along the coast of Africa, he reaches the Cape Verde Islands with his friends. He thinks that this is the starting point of Ethiopia. On the way, he meets two Portuguese ships from India in the East. He argues that Ptolemy's *Geography* was an important source of information for travelers. The King of Portugal sent a fleet to Cape Verde from Lisbon in 1499. Vespucci pinpoints the position of Cape Verde with astrolabe and quadrant tools. After saying

that 13 ships reached the Cape Verde Islands, he said that there were white and naked people in the land where these ships arrived 700 leagues ahead. The ships go ahead Eastwards. Eight of these ships arrive in Cape Verde. According to him, this is in Ethiopia. Those in the flotilla receive gold from Zafala and aloe vera and silk cloth from Mezibino. From there they go to Tanzania and Kenya. Vespucci writes that the cities they visited were filled with gold, jewelry, cloth, spices, and useful plants.

Vespucci argues that these ships passed through Mecca before reaching the Red Sea. He tells us that they went to Kamaram in India, as well as to Al Hudaydah in present-day Yemen and Jeddah in Arabia. Recalling Gaspar de Gama (1458-1514) of Alexandria, who is thought to have traveled from Cairo to Malacca (Perini, 2013: 105), he emphasizes that the Indian Ocean is a place with different riches. Gaspar de Gama travels from Portugal to the Indian Ocean. He emphasizes that the Kingdom of Parlicat in India is rich in gold, pearls, precious stones. He mentions the precious stones, spices, and foods that the Portuguese brought from Arabia and India, including cinnamon, ginger, benzoin, porcelains, aloe vera, diamonds, pepper, and cloves. Vespucci is aware that his continent is Europe, that is, *Europia* in Latin.

5) Amerigo Vespucci's letter to Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco dei Medici (Lisbon, 1502; pages 109-113)

In this letter, he believes that sailors need such things as wood and water to move forward on their path; Vespucci is also seen using the stars to navigate and discover varied species of plants and animals. Vespucci is surprised at the longevity

of the natives; he describes how the natives lived and argues that they ate fruits and vegetables, as well as human flesh; in fact, its purpose is to make use of the animal and plant species he admires. According to Vespucci, all these natural riches belong to primitive natives who have no laws, but they must be taken from the hands of the natives and traded.

Vespucci writes to Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco dei Medici and states that he had previously written to him from Guinea. After receiving water, wood, and other necessities, Vespucci leaves with his friends and announces that he has arrived at a new piece of land. This new piece of land is filled with varied species, indigenous people, and God's natural wonders. It is not in the Northern Hemisphere, but in the Southern Hemisphere. He examines the geometric shapes, locations, and movements of stars. This new piece of land is very fertile. There are evergreen trees, a variety of fruits, flowers, and plants. He admires the colors and songs of birds. Vespucci feels like he's in Heaven. He sees lions and tigers, as well as animals such as snakes, gazelles, goats, and rabbits there. None of these animals were domesticated according to him. The people who live here have neither kings, nor laws: everything is common, and there is no such thing as owning property. Locals live in houses in groups; they eat sitting on the floor; their dishes are fruits, herbs, and seafood. They eat the meat of other animals, as well as human flesh. Men pierce their lips and cheeks and put bones and stones there. Locals are polygamous: birth events are not celebrated. The life of the locals with healthy living conditions is long. Their wars are fierce.

6) Amerigo Vespucci's letter to an unknown Florentine (probably 1502; pages 114-119)

In this letter, Amerigo Vespucci says that sailors may face many natural difficulties, such as storms, as they move forward. He emphasizes that the people of the places he went to were primitive: they were naked; they would care for rattles and bird feathers; they had no idea of the commercial value of the gold and pearls they own. Therefore, these people can be used as slaves. This letter reveals Amerigo Vespucci's desire to use their resources for trade, arguing that the natives are primitive.

Amerigo Vespucci begins his letter by saying that the nights are getting longer, and the days are getting shorter, that is, winter is coming. Despite the difficulties at sea and the wintry weather, he is told that he is 1600 leagues away from Lisbon. With friends over the course of three trips, he says that they are advancing in the Atlantic Ocean. He says he saw naked people along the 2000-yard road. There are also about five between these lands and Portugal. He argues that there is a time difference of about eight hours between him and the Italian city of Ferrara. He thinks that people born in temperate regions are white, while those born in warmer regions are black. In the new land, he meets, the trees are always lush and there are large and forested areas which offer oil and Vespucci's '*liqueur*.' In this letter, Vespucci explains that different seasons occur in two different hemispheres.

In addition, Vespucci says that the people of this new land, which he saw for the first time, were made slaves: he underlines that these people lived a lawless life free from trade in their own lands. Locals don't want the gold crosses and gemstone rings that Vespucci and his friends tried to give them. On his second trip, Vespucci explains that he bought pearls and sold them in Castile. Vespucci and his friends

are surprised that the natives think of feathers and fishbones as wealth, which they use as jewelry. They are also amazed that they receive 157 pearls in exchange for a rattle they give to a native: the natives do not know what a trade is. Vespucci describes how one can spend nine months and seven days in these places.

7) Amerigo Vespucci's letter to Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco dei Medici ('*Mundus Novus*' ['*New World*']; Lisbon, 1502-1503; pages: 120-135)

In this letter, Amerigo Vespucci justifies the use of valuable natural resources, such as gold, for trade purposes from the lands of natives who eat human flesh and are hostile to each other, because they are primitive.

The letter was originally in Italian, but was translated into Latin by Giovanni del Giocondo (Perini, 2013:129). Amerigo Vespucci realizes that he has arrived on a different and unknown continent. He says that he reached a piece of land that has a coast to the Atlantic Ocean. Here live unusual species of people and animals than in Europe; the climate is temperate. He tells us that they went to the Canary Islands and the Cape Verde. He makes use of the stars to find his direction; for this, he uses tools called astrolabes and quadrants. It also depicts the star Canopus. A part of this continent stays in the Northern Hemisphere, and the other part is in the Southern Hemisphere. He emphasizes that he always sees naked people there. Some locals pierce their cheeks, lips, nostrils, and ears, decorating them with stones. The men of the island may be married to more than one woman at a time. According to Vespucci, these people don't know what shame is. Vespucci confronts and talks to a man who says he has eaten 300 people. The way the natives fight is also erratic, they fight with bows and arrows. Vespucci is surprised that the natives lived so

long. Since he sees that animals and fish are abundant, he thinks that these people are not hunting. The trees are lush and fertile; nature has a variety of fruits, oils, and liquids. Gold is also abundant there, but gold has no value to the locals. The climate is mild.

Vespucci states that he made his first two trips for the King of Spain, that this was his third trip, and that he would embark on a fourth trip.

8) Amerigo Vespucci's letter to Pier Soderini (Lisbon, September 4, 1504; pages: 136-165)

In this letter, Vespucci describes in detail his four journeys. A Florentine named Benvenuto Benvenuti asks him to write to Pier Soderini about the places he has been to. For this reason, Amerigo Vespucci describes his four travels to Pier Soderini in this letter. The financial supporter of the first two of these travels was King Ferdinand of Spain; the last two voyages sponsor was King Manuel I of Portugal. Again, by criticizing the natives of the lands he visits for being cannibals and naked, they try to make the exploitation of the lands and natural resources of the places they live in acceptable.

Vespucci emphasizes that the main purpose of these four trips on behalf of Spain and Portugal is trade. For his first two voyages, King Ferdinand of Spain (Castile) puts four ships at his disposal, expecting him to discover new lands. He made his first voyage from Cadiz on 10 May 1497 and went ahead to the Canary Islands; it is 280 leagues from Portugal; in 18 months, he sees various places; he witnesses the existence of a new continent and many islands. When he arrives, he

tries to gift items such as bells, mirrors, belts, and small balls to communicate with people on the shore. The skin color of the natives is almost red; they walk around naked because they have no shame. They are broad faced. They do not have any eyebrows or eyelashes. They run fast. Their weapons are bows and arrows. Instead of metal, they use animal bones, fishbones, and wood to make weapons. They fight against those who do not speak their mother tongues. The only reason for their war is hostility; they do not fight for property. They have no kings, no laws, no legislators, and no penal systems. They talk little. They are primitive; they do not have specific feeding hours or daily schedules; they sleep in hammocks. There are no institutions of marriage: they can have relationships with as many women as they want. Women are very fertile. They live in huts made of wood. Their only richness is the bird feathers, fishbones they use as ornamental materials, and the white or green stones they place in the cheek and lip holes. They have no gold or precious stones. They put food and water at the bedside of patients; they dance around it; they leave the patients alone for a few days and wait for them to recover and return to their midst. They bathe patients with fever with freezing water, then rotate them around the fire. There are herbal remedies. They also eat human flesh.

Vespucci says he sees only gold as a source of profit. He then arrives at a port. This is Venezuela, which looks like Venice. There are bridges to about 44 houses; The people of this place are so savage that they attack them with bows and arrows. Vespucci and his friends kill as many as 15-20 locals and wound many others. On top of that, they enter their homes and take some items from these houses. The next day, they meet people speaking a different language in another port. These people eat snakes, make bread from fish, and consume fruits and plants.

They live with these people for three days. Vespucci admires the parrots of this region.

Later, Vespucci and his friends see a lot of people and the river. Wild animals such as lions, leopards, deer, and pigs live here. These people have no horses, mules, donkeys, dogs, or cows. The trees are always lush, and the climate is mild. They also baptize some natives here. This is Parias.

Advancing 870 leagues, they continue to search for gold. During the 13-month journey, they came across gold mines. Then they arrive at a harbor where there are friendly people. As they move on for another 37 days, they meet many groups of people. They live on the islands for 7 days and again arrive at a place where there are about 400 naked people. They fight with these people. The next day, they fight people who have painted their bodies and wear feathers, capturing about 250 of them. They returned to Spain with 222 slaves.

For his second voyage, Vespucci left Cadiz with his friends on 16 May 1499 with three ships; he follows a route again towards Cape Verde. Vespucci and his friends pass through the Canary Islands. They come to an island called the Island of Fire. At this point, they meet their needs for wood and water. For 44 days, they pass through unfamiliar lands. They see a few natives. They find more people on another island. They have canoes and are cannibals. Elsewhere, they meet friendly people. From here they get 150 pearls for just one bell. The fruits here are extremely healthy, and the soil is fertile. They will stay there for 17 days. Later, as they move along the sea, they see many locals on a beach. These are very primitive people; two dried zucchinis hang around their necks; one is filled with grass, the other with

white flour; they soak herbs in flour and eat them. There are plenty of wild animals on this island. Vespucci and his friends leave this island and move on to another island where they see burly people. It has exceptionally large arrows. This could be Curaçao.

Vespucci and his friends move on; They stay in another port for 47 days and receive valuable pearls in exchange for cheap items such as bells and mirrors that they give to the locals. They brought the mussel, the 130th of which was the pearl, to Queen Isabella in Spain. They learn from the people of this place about where to fish. They go to the Antilles and collect provisions. They returned to Cadiz on 8 September.

Vespucci began his third voyage from Lisbon on 10 May 1501, with the financial support of Portugal instead of Spain. He sets out on three ships for the Canary Islands. It passes through the Western regions of Africa. They receive water and wood from Ethiopia. On August 17, they set foot on a completely different land. They get their water and wood needs from there with their friends. They leave bells and mirrors for the locals there.

The next morning, they see the natives making smoke from the ship. They ask the captain to come to the shore to see if these people have riches such as spices or herbal medicine. They stay here for more than five days. Indigenous men ask women to talk to them. They form a ring around one of Vespucci's friends. Meanwhile, a woman descends from the mountain. Other women come and drag Vespucci's friend on the ground. When the men start shooting arrows at Vespucci and his friends, they fire four shots; the locals flee. Later, Vespucci and his friends

left and came to the place they called St. Augustine's Cape. On the way, they see the locals on a shore. They will stay here for five days. Three natives voluntarily come to Portugal with them. Vespucci and his friends traveled 750 leagues from this port. There are trees. Some produce resin. From here they also collect provisions. On February 15, they continued to move across the ocean. Vespucci argues that on April 7, the night lasts 15 hours because the Sun is in the last period of Aries and the season in this region is winter.

As Vespucci and his friends move on, they see the existence of a very cold region. The captain decides to return to Portugal. After five days, they arrive in a warm region. They stay in this warm zone for ten days of May. From here they turn the course towards the Azur Islands. They arrived in Lisbon on September 7, 1502, but returned with two ships, because the third ship changed direction and headed for Sierra Leone. Vespucci claims that these travels lasted 15 months and 11 days.

As for the fourth and final voyage of Vespucci and his companions to Portugal, they sailed with six ships from Lisbon on May 10, 1503. They stay in Cape Verde for 13 days. The captain wants to go to Sierra Leone, but they see a new piece of land 300 leagues away: a deserted island. The chief captain's 300-ton ship is lost here. On this island, Vespucci descends with nine sailors in search of a place to leave the ship. The uninhabited island has freshwater springs, trees, and birds; they catch some of these birds. There are also animals such as mice and snakes here. Frightened, they continue their way and find a harbor they call the Bay of Saints. This place is 300 leagues away from the other island. 260 leagues away, after arriving at another port and deciding to build a fortress, they left 24 European

men there. After 5 months of trying to build this castle, they returned to Portugal on June 18, 1504.

9) Amerigo Vespucci's letter to Cardinal Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros (Seville, December 9, 1508; pages**: 166-168)**

In this letter, originally in Spanish, Vespucci states that it is necessary to decide what to do on the islands. As the natives of these islands are cannibals, it is more expedient to trade the natural resources of these islands than to leave the islands to the natives. The trade with these islands is different from the trade of the Portuguese King with the Arabs. The king receives cloth from the Arabs in exchange for goods. It is necessary to send to the islands fabric and materials for the construction of buildings: the people of this new land are naked cannibals. It will take time to bring spices from here. Vespucci asks Cardinal Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros to manage the cloth trade to the islands.

APPENDIX 2: OTHER SAILORS WHO LIVED IN THE SAME PERIOD AS AMERIGO VESPUCCI, PIONEERED, AND CONTINUED HIS DISCOVERIES

- John Cabot (1450–1499), an Italian navigator working for England, found Newfoundland;
- Bartolomeu Dias (1450–1500) was a Portuguese traveler; he set out from Portugal and arrived at the Cape of Good Hope;
- Christopher Columbus (1451–1506), a Genoese traveler working for Spain, found the Americas by chance, while trying to get to Asia in 1492;
- The Spaniard Juan Ponce de León (1460–1521) was the first to reach Florida;
- Pedro Álvares Cabral (1467–1520), a Portuguese navigator, is thought to have been the discoverer of Brazil;
- Vasco da Gama (1469–1524) was the first Portuguese navigator to reach India by passing through the Cape of Good Hope;
- The Spaniard Vasco Núñez de Balboa (1475–1519) arrived in Panama and viewed the Pacific Ocean off the coast of the Americas;
- A Spanish traveler named Francisco Pizarro (1475–1541) conquered the Inca Empire and claimed the right of the King of Spain over all the lands that belonged to the empire;
- The Portuguese traveler Ferdinand Magellan (1480–1521), working for Spain, initiated the first world tour by sea, leaving the Strait of Magellan, now known by his name, into the Pacific Ocean; since he claimed that the

Philippines belonged to Spain, he was killed there and unable to complete the world tour he had started;

- The Spaniard navigator Juan Sebastián Elcano (1476–1526) completed Magellan's unfinished world tour [as the captain of the *Concepción*, one of the five ships that sailed with Magellan, and when Magellan was murdered, he completed his world tour with Victoria, one of the two remaining ships of the five (see The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2018)[189]];
- Diogo Rodrigues (1490–1501, Portugal – 21 April 1577, Goa) discovered Rodrigues Island, now known by his name, in 1528;
- The Italian navigator Giovanni da Verrazzano (1485–1528), working on behalf of France, found the northeastern regions of the American continent; he made discoveries from South Carolina to Newfoundland;
- As a Spaniard, Hernán Cortés (1485–1545) conquered the territory of the Aztec Empire;
- A Frenchman called Jacques Cartier (1491–1557) discovered Canada;
- As a Spaniard, Hernando de Soto (1496–1542) saw the Florida and the Mississippi Rivers for the first time;
- The Spaniard discoverer Francisco Vásquez de Coronado (1510–1554) found the Grand Canyon;
- As a Spanish navigator, Francisco de Orellana (1511–1546) roamed around the Amazon River's bed between 1541 and 1542;

[189] The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica. 2018. "Juan Sebastián Del Cano." *Encyclopædia Britannica*: https://www.britannica.com/biography/Juan-Sebastian-del-Cano (accessed: 04/07/2018).

- ❖ Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa (1532–1592) was a Spanish navigator who sailed in the Pacific Ocean;
- ❖ A Russian traveler called Yermak Timofeyevich (1532-1585) conquered the Siberian Khanate;
- ❖ English navigator Henry Hudson (1565-1611) explored Labrador, Greenland and Hudson Bay in the northern Atlantic Ocean and its vicinity ("Explorers and Navigators genealogy Project," 2018).[190] In addition to the Hudson Bay, a river and a strait in America are also called "Hudson" (Caswell, 2017).[191]

[190] "Explorers and Navigators genealogy project." 2018. *Geni_family_tree*. Web: https://www.geni.com/projects/Explorers-and-Navigators/140 (accessed: 02/02/2018).
[191] Caswell, John Edwards. 15/12/2017. "Henry Hudson: English Navigator and Explorer." *Encyclopædia Britannica*: www.britannica.com/biography/Henry-Hudson (accessed: 2/2/2018).

APPENDIX 3: MARTIN WALDSEEMÜLLER'S WORLD MAP (1507)

Resource: Waldseemüller, Martin. *Universalis cosmographia secundum Ptholomaei traditionem et Americi Vespucii alioru[m]que lustrationes [Universal cosmography according to Ptolemaic tradition and Amerigo Vespucci's depiction]*. [Strasburg, France: 1507]. Map. Web: https://www.loc.gov/item/2003626426/ (access date: 08/12/2017). Credits: Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division, Washington, D.C., United States.

TÜRKÇE ÖZ

Amerigo Vespucci, çeşitli Avrupalı arkadaşları ile meslektaşlarının yanı sıra babasına onbeşinci yüzyılın sonuna doğru ve onaltıncı yüzyılın başlarında Yeni Dünya'yı --Amerika kıtasını-- tasvir ettiği toplam dokuz mektup[192] yazmıştır. Babası Anastagio Vespucci'ye yazdığı birinci mektubu (1476), Katolik bir aile tarafından yetiştirildiğini gösterir: Amerigo Vespucci mektubunu imzalamadan önce adını bir Hristiyan azizin adı gibi Latince *'Emericus'* olarak yazmıştır. İkinci mektubunda (1492), Mantova dükünün vekiline, döneminin para birimi *charlini*'den bahsetmiştir. Vespucci üçüncü, dördüncü ve beşinci mektuplarını Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco dei Medici'ye yazmıştır. Üçüncü mektubunda (1500), Yeni Dünya'nın hayvanlarının çeşitliliği karşısında duyduğu hayranlığı belirtmiş ve Avrupa'ya ticaret amaçlı pamuk, logwood, inciler, altın, beril ve ametiste benzeyen taşlar getirdiğini yazmıştır. Dördüncü mektubunda (1501), Vespucci Portekizlilerin keşifleri sayesinde ticarette uzmanlaştığını anlatmıştır. Beşinci mektubunda (1502), Vespucci yerlilerin ne kültürel değerlere sahip ne de yasal ve idari sistemleri olan ilkel yamyamlar olduklarını iddia etmiştir. Altıncı mektubunda (muhtemelen 1502), adı bilinmeyen bir Floransalı'ya, yerlilerin köle olarak sömürülebileceğini yazmıştır. Yeni Dünya'daki ağaçların yağlar ve meyveler gibi ürünlerinden bahsettiği yedinci mektubunu (1502-1503) tekrar Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco dei Medici'ye yazmıştır. Sekizinci mektubunda (1504), Pier Soderini'ye yerlilerin evlerini nasıl yağmaladığını anlatmıştır. Dokuzuncu mektubunda (1508), Kardinal Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros'a yerlilerden

[192] Kaynak Mektuplar: Vespucci, Amerigo. *Cronache Epistolari: Lettere 1476-1508.* Compiler: Perini, Leandro. 2013. Firenze [Florence]: Firenze University Press.

hiçbirisinin ticaretin ne olduğunu bilmediğinden, Yeni Dünya ile Eski Dünya'daki ticaret işlerinin farklılık göstereceğini açıklamıştır.

Araştırmanın kaynak verileri yukarıdaki mektuplardan oluşmaktadır. Bu çalışma, Amerigo Vespucci'nin mektuplarının çevreci bakış açısıyla incelenmesini amaçlamıştır. Dolayısıyla, günümüz doğa tahribatına yeni bir açıklama getirmiştir. Bu mektuplar, Vespucci'nin doğaya hayranlık ve saygı duyan çevre-merkezci bir gezgin mi, yoksa ticaretini yapmak için doğal kaynakları yağmalamayı amaçlayan insan-merkezci bir istilacı mı olduğu sorusuna cevap vermek amacıyla incelenmiştir. Vespucci'nin mektuplarının analizleri onun çevre-merkezciden ziyade insan-merkezci bir bakış açısına sahip olduğunu göstermektedir. Mektupları yeni ticari yollar kurmak için doğal kaynaklardan faydalanmak niyetinde olduğunu açığa çıkarmaktadır. Amerika topraklarını rüzgârlar vasıtasıyla ve gökcisimlerinin konumlarını izleyerek bulmuştur. Mektuplarındaki doğaya duyduğu hayranlık ile doğayı tahrip etmesi arasındaki çelişki, hem --yerlilerin haricinde-- Yeni Dünya'da bulunan kuşlar, bitkiler ve ağaçlar gibi canlılara hem de altınlar, elmaslar ve su gibi cansız doğal kaynaklara karşı beslediği hayranlık duygusunda belirginleşir. Eski Dünya'nın gıda, ilaç, giyecek, aksesuar ve alet yapmak için bunları tüketmek ve ticaretini yapmak isteğine bağlantılı olarak, hepsi doğa tarafından tedarik edilmiştir.

Vespucci doğanın insanlara sunduğu ürünlerin çeşitliliğini ve güzelliğini tasvir ederek doğaya duyduğu hayranlığı dile getirmiştir. Buna rağmen, tüccar bir gezgin olan Vespucci, Descartes ile Bacon'ın mekanik dünya yaklaşımlarına öncülük eden görüşleri nedeniyle istilacı olarak düşünülebilir, çünkü doğanın insanların hizmetinde olduğunu vurgulamıştır. Aldığı kültürel eğitim doğaya karşı insan-merkezci açıdan bakmasına yol açmıştır. Asla çevre-merkezci olmamıştır.

Yaratılış'taki Cennet ve dünyanın yaratılışı tasvirlerinden ve Katolik azizlerin fikirlerinden etkilenmiştir: Aziz Francesco ona tüm yaratıklara saygı duymayı öğretmiş olsa da, Aziz Tomaso ona insanların diğer yaratıklardan daha üstün olduğunu öğretmiştir. İncil'de okuduklarına göre, doğa insana hizmet etmeye hazırdır.

Yerlilerin Avrupa'ya köle olarak getirilmesini de savunmuştur. Vespucci yerlilerin ilkel yamyamlar olduklarını belirterek günümüz doğa tahribatının temeli olan bir fikri desteklemiştir. Dolayısıyla, topraklarının ve doğal kaynaklarının sömürülebileceğini iddia etmiştir.

Vespucci'nin mektuplarına göre, Amerika kıtasında bulunan doğal kaynakların zenginliği Avrupalı tüccarlara büyük kazançlar sağladığı için önemliydi. Maalesef birçok türde hayvan ve bitki ortaya çıktıkları kıtalardan uzaklaştırılıp yeni topraklarda tüketilmeleri nedeniyle yok olmaktadır.

Sonuç olarak, Vespucci'nin insan-merkezci anlatılar içeren mektupları günümüzde birçok türün neslinin tükenmesine yol açmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Amerigo Vespucci, Çevrecilik, Doğal Kaynaklar, Ekoloji, Ticaret, Güney ve Orta Amerika

VERİ TABANLARI İÇİN TÜRKÇE

ÖZ

Agiş, Fazıla Derya. Amerigo Vespucci'nin Mektuplarında Çevre Algısı ve Günümüz Doğa Tahribatının İzleri, Doktora Tezi, Danışman: Prof. Dr. Nevin Özkan, 191 s.

Araştırmanın verileri Amerigo Vespucci'nin dokuz mektubundan oluşmaktadır. Bu çalışma, Amerigo Vespucci'nin mektuplarının çevreci bakış açısıyla incelenmesini amaçlamıştır. Dolayısıyla, günümüz doğa tahribatına yeni bir açıklama getirmiştir. Bu mektuplar, Vespucci'nin doğaya hayranlık ve saygı duyan çevre-merkezci bir gezgin mi, yoksa ticaretini yapmak için doğal kaynakları yağmalamayı amaçlayan insan-merkezci bir istilacı mı olduğunu keşfetmek amacıyla incelenmiştir. Vespucci'nin mektuplarının analizleri onun çevre-merkezciden ziyade insan-merkezci bir bakış açısına sahip olduğunu göstermektedir. Mektupları yeni ticari yollar kurmak için doğal kaynaklardan faydalanmak niyetinde olduğunu açığa çıkarmaktadır. Amerika topraklarını rüzgârlar vasıtasıyla ve gökcisimlerinin konumlarını izleyerek bulmuştur. Mektuplarındaki doğaya duyduğu hayranlık ile doğayı tahrip etmesi arasındaki çelişki, hem --yerlilerin haricinde-- Yeni Dünya'da bulunan kuşlar, bitkiler ve ağaçlar gibi canlılara hem de altınlar, elmaslar ve su gibi cansız doğal kaynaklara karşı beslediği hayranlık duygusunda belirginleşir. Eski Dünya'nın gıda, ilaç, giyecek, aksesuar ve alet yapmak için bunları tüketmek ve ticaretini yapmak isteğine bağlantılı olarak, hepsi doğa tarafından tedarik edilmiştir. Tüccar bir gezgin olan Vespucci, Descartes ile Bacon'ın mekanik dünya yaklaşımlarına öncülük eden görüşleri nedeniyle istilacı olarak düşünülebilir. Maalesef birçok türde hayvan ve

bitki ortaya çıktıkları kıtalardan uzaklaştırılıp yeni topraklarda tüketilmeleri nedeniyle yok olmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Amerigo Vespucci, Çevrecilik, Doğal Kaynaklar, Ekoloji, Ticaret, Güney ve Orta Amerika

ABSTRACT

Amerigo Vespucci wrote nine letters in total to various European friends and colleagues as well as his father, in which he depicted the New World --the American continent-- of the late fifteenth century and early sixteenth century.[193] His first letter (1476), to his father Anastagio Vespucci elucidates that he had been raised by a Catholic family: Amerigo Vespucci wrote his name in Latin as *'Emericus,'* like the Christian saint's name, before his signature. In his second letter (1492), to the deputy of the Duke of Mantua, he mentioned *charlini*, the monetary unit of his time. Vespucci wrote his third, fourth, and fifth letters to Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco dei Medici. In his third letter (1500), he expressed his appreciation of the variety of animals in the New World, and reported that he had transferred cotton, bloodwood, pearls, gold, beryl, and amethyst-like stones to Europe for trade purposes. In his fourth letter (1501), Vespucci explained that the Portuguese excelled in trade due to their discoveries. In his fifth letter (1502), Vespucci claimed that the natives were primitive cannibals who had neither cultural values nor legal and administrative systems. In his sixth letter (most probably 1502), to an anonymous Florentine, he stated that the natives could be exploited as slaves. He wrote his seventh letter (1502-1503) again to Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco dei Medici, in which he talked about the products of the New World's trees, such as oils and fruits. In his eighth letter (1504), he described to Pier Soderini how he plundered the homes of some natives. In his ninth letter (1508), he expressed to Cardinal Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros

[193] Resource Letters: Vespucci, Amerigo. *Cronache Epistolari: Lettere 1476-1508.* Compiler: Perini, Leandro. 2013. Firenze [Florence]: Firenze University Press.

how trade affairs would differ in the New World from those in the Old World, since none of the natives were aware of what trade was.

The source data of this research consisted of the letters mentioned above. This study aimed to analyze Amerigo Vespucci's letters from an environmental perspective, and thus shed new light on today's nature devastation. These letters were analyzed with the goal of answering the question whether Vespucci was an ecocentric traveler who admired and respected nature, or an anthropocentric invader who intended to plunder natural resources to trade. The analyses of Vespucci's letters show that he had an anthropocentric point of view rather than an ecocentric one. His letters prove that he intended to exploit natural resources to establish new trade routes. He discovered the American land with the help of winds and celestial navigation. The contradiction between the appreciation of nature and the destruction of nature in his letters reflected his admiration not only for all living creatures such as birds, plants, and trees --with the exception of the indigenous natives-- but also for inanimate natural resources such as gold, diamonds, and water found in the New World. All were provided by nature in conjunction with the Old World's willingness to consume and trade these to create nourishments, medicines, clothes, accessories, and tools.

Vespucci expressed his admiration of nature by describing the variety and beauty of goods that nature offered human beings. However, Vespucci, who was a merchant traveler, may be regarded as an invader due to his views that preceded the mechanistic model approaches of Descartes and Bacon, since he emphasized that nature should be in the service of humans. His cultural education led to the formation of his anthropocentric view on nature. He had never been ecocentric. He

was influenced by the description of the Eden and the creation of earth in *Genesis* and the ideas of Catholic saints: Saint Francis taught him to respect all creatures, but Saint Thomas taught him that humans were superior to other creatures. According to what he read in the Bible; nature was available to serve human beings.

He also supported the transportation of indigenous people to Europe as slaves. Vespucci promoted an idea that is the basis of today's nature devastation by saying that the natives were primitive cannibals. Therefore, he claimed that their lands and natural resources could be exploited.

According to Vespucci's letters, the richness of the natural resources found in the American continent was crucial for creating huge revenues for European traders. Unfortunately, many species of animals and plants have become extinct because of their transportation from their original continents and their consumption in new lands.

To conclude, Vespucci's anthropocentric narrative letters led to the extinction of various species today.

Key Words: Amerigo Vespucci, Environmentalism, Natural Resources, Ecology, Trade, South and Central America

Dissertation title in English: PERCEPTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE TRACES OF TODAY'S NATURE DEVASTATION IN AMERIGO VESPUCCI'S LETTERS

FOR DATABASES

ABSTRACT

Agiş, Fazıla Derya, Perception of the Environment and the Traces of Today's Nature Devastation in Amerigo Vespucci's Letters, Ph.D. Thesis, Advisor: Prof. Dr. Nevin Özkan, 191 p.

The data of this research consisted of nine letters written by Amerigo Vespucci. This study aimed to analyze Amerigo Vespucci's letters from an environmental perspective, and thus shed new light on today's nature devastation. These letters were analyzed with the goal of discovering whether Vespucci was an ecocentric traveler who admired and respected nature, or an anthropocentric invader who intended to plunder natural resources to trade. The analyses of Vespucci's letters show that he had an anthropocentric point of view rather than an ecocentric one. His letters prove that he intended to exploit natural resources to establish new trade routes. He discovered the American land with the help of winds and celestial navigation. The contradiction between the appreciation of nature and the destruction of nature in his letters reflected his admiration not only for all living creatures such as birds, plants, and trees --with the exception of the indigenous natives-- but also for inanimate natural resources such as gold, diamonds, and water found in the New World. All were provided by nature in conjunction with the Old World's willingness to consume and trade these to create nourishments, medicines, clothes, accessories, and tools. Vespucci, who was a merchant traveler, may be regarded as an invader due to his views that preceded the mechanistic model approaches of Descartes and Bacon. Unfortunately, many species of animals and plants have become extinct because of their transportation from their original continents and their consumption in new lands.

Key Words: Amerigo Vespucci, Environmentalism, Natural Resources, Ecology, Trade, South and Central America

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This doctoral thesis is research completed at Ankara University, Institute of Social Sciences, Department of Western Languages and Literatures, Department of Italian Language and Literature. The subject of this doctoral thesis is the perception of the environment in the letters of Amerigo Vespucci and the traces of today's destruction of nature. In this thesis, Amerigo Vespucci's desire to exploit nature, which is expressed in his letters, is mentioned depicting the animals and plants he encountered in America, where he went for the first time, and his admiration for nature and his desire to exploit nature, which contradicts this feeling are revealed. It can be said that Amerigo Vespucci's description of the people he met in the Americas as cannibals in his letters was a method of defending his own argument in order to benefit from the natural resources of this continent, which is the habitat of the natives, alongside the labor force of these natives.

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Fazıla Derya AGİŞ

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